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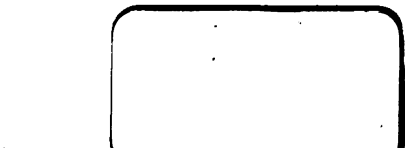
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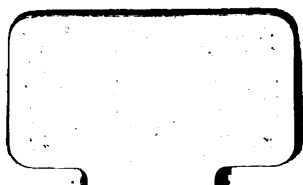


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PROVED IN THE FIRE.

A STORY

OF

THE BURNING OF HAMBURG.

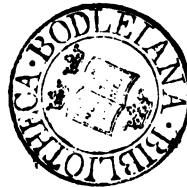
BY

WILLIAM DUTHIE,

AUTHOR OF "COUNTING THE COST," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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TO
HENRY J. SLACK, F.G.S.

Hon. Sec. R.M.S.

THIS STORY,
AS A TESTIMONY OF SINCERE FRIENDSHIP,
IS INSCRIBED,
BY THE AUTHOR.

PROVED IN THE FIRE.

CHAPTER I.

FRANZ RUDIGER.

WE are in the old city of Leipsic. What an unworthy conception of things had he, who summed up the capabilities of this Saxon emporium as mere warehouse-room for so much cloth, and so many tanned hides ; so many pieces of finelinen ; so many reeking stacks of damp paper ! Paper heavy with accumulated learning, clinging together with pale ink, and emitting such an odour as may possibly give

inspiration to authors, but can produce no other effect on ordinary mortals than a sick headache. Not counting the pigeons, which are as household divinities, there is not a nook in the quaint old houses of Leipsic; not a brick or stone in its time-painted walls, that is not full of the liveliest romance; not a shadowing tree or cluster of flowers in the bright green girdle which encircles it, that does not contain more of God's cheerfulness and poetry, than half the books exposed for sale upon its shelves at the last Midsummer Fair.

The fair is over; that is to say, the New Year's Fair of 1842. The accumulated treasures that lately blocked up store-house and private dwelling are dispersed. These treasures crammed the lofty attics, spread themselves in a lazy

torrent over the broad floors, and into the quiet crannies of the houses; and finally poured their bulk prodigally into the street, only to be ineffectually dammed and stayed by wooden booths, pens, and odd spontaneous structures. These multifarious treasures are dispersed; and the brisk French traders, the steady-going Britons, no less than the long-robed Israelites of Poland, have gone to their homes, and left the quiet stones and barred up warehouses of Leipsic to the students and the pigeons.

But, although a general calm falls upon the city, as the last wandering minstrels straggle out of its gates, there are busy corners left in it. Your true Saxon is a labour-loving mortal, and in the lapses between Fair and Fair, works bravely to fill up the spare time.

With just such busy hands have we to do at present in the workshop of Franz Rudiger, carpenter and builder, at the sign of the Black Horse-shoe.

Amid the whistling of planes, and the brisk grinding of saws against wood, plied by his industrious workmen, himself the busiest of them all, stands our worthy master. The flush of labour is on his broad face, and little whisps of wood-shaving are sticking in his crisp hair. He is a portly man; almost too portly to make a good carpenter. Though there is the healthiest of colours on his cheek, and his hair, curling round his loose cap, is still of the richest brown, Master Franz Rudiger is waxing in years. He has no need to be puffing over that obstinate block of oak, for he has grown wealthy in industry; and it is just pos-

sible that his youngest apprentice could shape it quicker and as well as he. But he cannot give up the craft of his youth, and probably cherishes some stubborn notions about his own vigour and skill which it would be unwise to question. "Baumeister Rudiger" is a proud title for one who came into the town some twenty years ago, with a knapsack strapped to his back, and a foot limping from long travelling. Not that Franz Rudiger is boastful. No; he leaves to others the telling of his fortunes; he is shrewd enough to perceive that a successful man, even if he sometimes make enemies, may safely leave his praises to his friends, and he will never fail of flatterers. Still, it is not to be denied that the words, "Baumeister Rudiger" tickle the ears of old

Franz strangely. If he seldom gives himself the title, he is not loth to receive it; satisfying himself with the idea that it is for the sake of his wife, the "gnädige Frau," (not so very long since simple Frau Rudiger) who has a weakness for such things; who is apt to parade the St. Nicolai Platz somewhat ostentatiously, accompanied by her maid, Winnie, evidently exalted in the public eye by the designation of "Baumeisterinn Rudiger (geboren von Schnitzel.)"

Out in the cold sunlight this February morning, the birds are chirping and fluttering among the stacked timber that stands in old Franz's yard. No mighty store certainly; for Leipsic is but a small town after all, and its internal craftships are diminutive, spite of its world-wide fame. But old Franz

delights to look at it as he tugs away at his tough block, raising his eyes now and then towards the open door, near which his bench stands. To him every rough hewn stem, or sawn plank, might be a full-leaved tree, for the vitality it possesses. In the timbers there collected stand the representatives of his own fortunes. They had been mere tiny seed in their time, and had taken root, had flourished, and shot up into the air, gathering bulk and solidity with their years. Now they rested, ponderous, tall, and compact, the very realization of advancement and success. There lay, too, old stores and remnants; shattered portions of huts, or mansions, each with the ineffaceable mark which told of its former purpose, either of domestic comfort, or of ostentatious

grandeur. There was something sorrowful in the aspect of these remains, as there is in that of all which has once served the purposes of man; and yet they had played their part, and fulfilled their task. To the old and prosperous carpenter they might appear but the cast off vanities, or intervening steps by which he had attained to his present height. Stock and stone, and broken down utility, each told its story.

To Franz, who had his share of imagination, there was a touch of magic, of faerie about them, which made them appear other than they were; which put a tongue into every rugged cleft, and raised a living spirit in every inanimate form. The old man's eye glistened as he looked. Now and then, relinquishing his labours, he would stand

up firm and erect, and gazing into the wood-yard with a deep sense of gratification impressed upon every line of his broad, massive features. Suddenly a visible shade would pass over all; a cloud over the sunny landscape: with a deep drawn but suppressed sigh he would bend down again over his work. Even Baumeister Rudiger had his innermost and secret sorrow.

From the well-stocked wood-yard, the work-shops extended towards the dwelling house. The shops themselves were roomy and well lighted, and conspicuous above all for a neatness and regularity little to be expected in the scene of such occupations.

The whole home working establishment of Herr Rudiger did not exceed a dozen workmen, and several ap-

prentices. When more hands were wanted, they must be picked from the neighbouring villages, or from among the straggling tramps at the Herberge—or the work must wait till they could be obtained. The last alternative was the most likely to happen.

“Christian,” said the old carpenter, turning his jolly face towards a young man who, at no great distance from him, was deeply engaged in some artistic work; “did you see to the shifting of those Memels?”

“I did, sir,” answered Christian, raising his eyes. And deep, meaningful eyes they were, of the clearest hazel. “The lower ones were damp, but I have turned them on their ends, and put some fresh props by the wall.”

There was a tone of respectful confidence in the reply, which told of something more than the ordinary relations of master and workman. Franz met the young man's eyes with a bright sparkle in his own, and a kind smile about his mouth as he exclaimed :

“Good boy; you did right.”

“And thou, Jacob,” continued the master playfully—for the secret regret betrayed a few moments before by his deep sigh, was of the most transient character—“What said Winnie to thee last night? Is she kind yet?”

Jacob, who was in a state of abstraction, either about Winnie, or a refractory screw, upon which he was exerting his strength, blurted out rather

unceremoniously: "Not that I know of, sir. If she is, she has never told me of it."

"Give her time, boy, give her time. The women folk don't like to be hurried."

"Nor the men folk either," answered Jacob, with a terrible wrench at the screw.

Then suddenly recollecting his good manners—he was the eldest apprentice—he added:—"That is, if it please you, sir, I know nothing about the matter."

Jacob was a well-made, light-haired, fair-skinned youth, whose whole countenance presented a surface of down, whiter and finer than unspun silk. Rather longer, and of a slightly deeper shade, about his upper lip were indica-

tions of the coveted moustachios. Whether from his late exertion, or some strong sympathy with the subject of his master's sly inquiries, a purple flush now suffused his cheeks up to his very eyes.

Old Franz crowed rather than chuckled at the evident discomfiture of his apprentice, and the moisture crept into his eyes. Then suddenly checking this outburst of hilarity with a gulp, he continued in the kindest tone :

“Hold thyself still, yet awhile, Jacob, and mind thy work. Never heed the girl. Thou hast before thee long years of labour and travel. Much patience and steadfastness wilt thou need; but the time will come; and if thou pass bravely through the next few years, it will not be to regret these present

idle heart-throbbings. How old art thou?"

"Eighteen, come Easter and two days, sir."

"True. I ought to have remembered it. And then thy time will be out?"

"Yes, the same day, sir."

"A-ha! wilt not be glad?"

Jacob was silent and looked down. His tell-tale cheeks, which the wind could waken into a glow, reddened again. "I shall not be sorry, master. But——"

"But?—heh, thou wouldst be sorry if it were not so? Never make excuses, lad; they are the makeshifts of rogues or simpletons: they never serve the purpose of plain truth."

"I should be glad, very glad, sir," said Jacob, "but for mother."

“And what says the mother?”

“Mother says I am too young to wander yet, and know too little of the world.”

“Then the sooner thou learnest to know the world the better, Jacob. The world’s knowledge will not come to thee in Leipsic.”

“That’s what I tell mother,” exclaimed Jacob eagerly. “But if you were to speak to her, she would mind you better than she does me.”

“No, Jacob,” replied the old carpenter, with a sigh that had something of solemnity in it. “No one but God should come between a mother and her son. But there is yet time. Wait, and be dutiful. The good mother will learn to know what is best.”

A slight shade passed over his face as

he spoke, and again the echo, as it were, of the old sigh, bubbled up to his lips. Then he looked at Christian, and his face brightened with its usual expression.

At this moment a light and rapid footstep approached the workshop, and a female face of a healthy brown tinge, comely and bright, with deep, merry eyes, peeped in at the door.

“Well, Winnie?” interrogated old Franz.

Winnie curtsyed, and with a meekness of tone which scarcely agreed with her roguish face and smart figure, replied:

“Would the Herr come in to his coffee? The Mistress was waiting?”

And with a concentrated flash of her eyes, which seemed to strike Christian ✓

Jacob, and the old man all at once, she vanished from their sight.

Rudiger wagged his head with a broad smile; Christian looked out at the open door in a haze of thought; and poor Jacob rivalled a scarlet geranium in the redness of his face. The master laid aside his work, and strode with a measured pace after the light-footed messenger. Christian turned towards Jacob, the nearly emancipated apprentice, as soon as the sound of his master's footsteps told him that he was out of hearing, and addressed him with an abrupt remark.

"Whither goest thou, Jacob?"

"When I am free?"

"Of course."

"I know not. Perhaps to Hanau, or Berlin, or Dresden, or—ach! Chris-

tian! how can I tell among all these fine places, which will be the best for me?"

"Why not to Hamburg?"

"And so to England, eh, Christian?"

"Perhaps. If thou hast tongue and money enough to make the venture. Hark, Jacob, if thy road leads to Hamburg, it may be I shall yet tramp the country with thee."

"Thou, Christian?"

"And why not—have I not rested long enough? Two years and more have I been in Leipsic."

"Hast thou told the master?"

"Not yet—there will be time."

"That would be glorious!" exclaimed Jacob, rubbing his hands in glee. "To travel the high-road together! I should not then be afraid of anything."

"We will talk of it again. Not a word to any one at present."

"Trust me, Christian; I will be as dumb as a post. I am afraid the master will be disappointed and grieved to hear it."

Christian turned away in silence.

CHAPTER II.

CHILDLESS.

The Frau Baumeisterinn Rudiger (geb: von Schnitzel,) might have been one of the most amiable women in existence. Sometimes she was that; but then she was subject to fits—not fainting or epileptic fits—but fits of passion; fits of ill-temper; and what was worst of all, fits of economy. The result of this last kind of attack was truly terrible. Then might the worthy Franz be seen, with a grim counte-

nance, gnashing his teeth over his lean beef and beans, day by day, and week by week; and the hungry jaws of journeyman and apprentice would gasp with delight at the bare mention of potatoe dumplings as an adjunct to the mid-day meal. Then the coffee became gray and watery; the sugar became scarce in the basin; the milk dribbled in homœopathic drops; and the butter failed altogether on the harsh, rye bread. Unfortunately too, these economical relapses were of all others the most obstinate and enduring. The fits of passion would burst and pass away; ill-temper might brood for a whole four-and-twenty hours over Frau Barbara's really pretty face; but those terrible attacks of parsimony defied both time and patience,

and only died out at last from sheer exhaustion.

And yet, as has been said, Frau Barbara Rudiger, (geb: von Schnitzel) might have been one of the most amiable women in the world; and some times was so, in spite of her fits of passion, of the mumps, and of economy. In spite, too, of her pride, and her outward demonstrations of the attributes to be exemplified in her as one of the illustrious line of the Von Schnitzels.

The Von Schnitzels were an Austrian family, from somewhere below the Enns. It had once flourished in great pomp and pride, and held high office in the civil and military service of his royal and imperial majesty the Emperor.

There were Maximilians and Rubrechts without number to be found in the family annals. Although they had never amassed great wealth, they lived upon their own estate, and might have done so to this day, but for an accident which happened to one unfortunate member of the house. This was Karl Nepomuc von Schnitzel, the last who lived upon his own land under the benign and beneficent countenance of the House of Hapsburg. This unlucky gentleman, during the period when Napoleon lay rather inconveniently locked up on the island of Lobau, was accused, and his enemies say, convicted, of having given some little private information to the enemy. By this information they were enabled to avert a great disaster, in a military

point of view, from themselves, and reversing the position to inflict a terrible blow and discouragement upon the troops and subjects of the Austrian Emperor. Perhaps this unfortunate namesake of the Bohemian prime saint, Nepomuc, was a maligned and persecuted man. However that may be, he lost estate, position, and country, and found it convenient, though rather difficult, to fly into the kingdom of Saxony; there to find refuge and live upon the illustrious name of the Von Schnitzels if he could. Thus it had come to pass, that, flying from the wrath of his imperial master, he lost his whole worldly wealth; and relying upon the gratitude (supposing him to be guilty) of his country's foe, whom he had

assisted, he did not succeed in replacing the loss. One of the ultimate results of all these misfortunes, was the marrying of Fräulein Barbara von Schnitzel to a mere carpenter.

Barbara possessed many of the pleasantest characteristics of the Austrian race proper. She was exceedingly pretty—some of her friends said, “had been,”—having small, delicate features, and bright expressive eyes. In her youthful days she had been slender in figure, light and graceful in every movement; could sing like a nightingale, dance like a sylph. Altogether, as has been said already twice before, she might have been one of the most amiable women in the universe. Time had not marred her personal attractions, any more than time usu-

ally does; indeed, it had been very lenient to them, considering that she already scored more than forty years. What she had lost in slenderness, she had gained in presence; she had not neglected her gift of song; and no doubt could still waltz with the best, if old Franz had ever asked her. And, when not afflicted by any of the before mentioned fits, she had the sweetest smile imaginable.

Of course the friends of Frau Rudiger—her female friends especially—had an infinite number of theories by which her eccentricities were to be accounted for. These theories were more or less spiteful according to their source. The dull people thought her a great deal too clever; the plain people laid her faults to her good

looks; the neglected people complained of her pride; and the mothers of large families sighed, and said what a pity it was she had never had any children! And really it is very possible that these honest people—the last we mean—were not far in the wrong; for there was a spirit of love in Frau Barbara which made itself visible by words and deeds, even in the midst of her fits. A spirit which only wanted a legitimate object for its expression to develop itself into positive benevolence, and the quintessence of affection. Perhaps—but we will leave that question for the present.

Honest Franz Rudiger sat sipping his coffee, and looking with a vacant eye from the quaint double window

of the common sitting-room, in the direction of the fine steeple of St. Nicolai which was visible therefrom. He was unusually silent, and in his abstraction drew a low sigh. It might have seemed only a deep-drawn breath, but that he checked it on its way, and made it tremulous.

"What ails thee, Franz?" asked the Frau, laying down her knitting.

It may have been that Rudiger doubted the tone of his wife's voice, for although it was low and soft, she had been employed in an abstract study of domestic economies for at least three weeks. At any rate, as he turned his head from the window, he looked inquiringly into her eyes for a moment before he answered.

"Nothing, wife. I was only thinking of the lad Jacob."

"Has he then made thee angry?"

"No, poor boy! he is too simple-hearted for that. But he will soon be out of his time—at Easter—and his heart is on its travels already."

"And why should that make thee sigh, dear Franz? Thou hast ever been a kind master to him, and all beneath thy hand. He will only be an apprentice the less—one vacant place, soon to be filled up."

"That is very true, Barbara mine," replied the worthy carpenter. The tone of voice, and the manner of his wife, as she stepped to his side, quite reassured him as to her regained amiability; and he answered now with his

usual freshness, and genial expression. "But, for all that, we miss an old face; and an empty stand is not always refilled with the true stock. More than that—" He paused and took his wife's hand as she stood before him, and looked into her face.

"What more than that?" inquired Frau Rudiger, with a shade of anxiety in her manner, as she met the silent gaze of her husband.

"More than that, dear wife, I am getting to miss old faces more than I used. Perhaps I feel that I am getting old myself. Perhaps—"

He paused.

"Perhaps?" questioned his wife, repeating his last word.

"Barbara, we have no son."

Frau Barbara's face whitened at these words, so abrupt, so unexpected, and so full of meaning; but the expression of her face did not change. At any other time, the most distant allusion to their barren wedlock, to the childlessness which left a void not to be filled up in their hearts and home, would have been a cause of mortal offence. It would have excited all the asperities of her nature. But now there was a quiet confidence in the tone in which the words were uttered, and something of a sad earnestness in the expression given to them, which took away from their sting.

Moreover, there are times and moods when the will is quiescent, and the tranquil mind receives impressions without at once forming conclusions upon

them, or at any rate of giving rash expressions to the emotions they create. Frau Barbara was just in that complacent state of mind. What little irritability might have been excited by the unlooked for impromptu of her husband, was restrained by her curiosity to hear to what conclusion his words would lead. The colour flushed back into her cheek at once. Without daring to repeat the words, she merely said :

“True, Franz. Well?”

“Barbara, we have no daughter,” continued the master, repeating the same idea in other words.

“No, Franz,” replied his wife with more than her husband’s earnestness, and even with something of solemnity in the tone of her voice. “Neither son, nor daughter.”

"Strangers come and go," continued Rudiger. "For a time, and in a poor, dim sort of way, they fill up the empty spaces round our hearth; and at each departure, the room they have made seems more bleak and empty than before. The wanderer's spell is upon them all. It is we alone who stand still while the world moves on, and leaves us only more sundered and alone. Oh, Barbara, that we should be childless!"

Never yet had the worthy master given vent to the secret sorrow of his heart in so deep and unrestrained an expression of grief. Often had the shadow rested upon his brow, and the unavailing words quivered on his lip; but hitherto the natural buoyancy of his disposition, and the delicate con-

sideration which always guided him in regard to his wife, had checked any open expression of his disappointment.

Frau Rudiger sat down by her husband's side, holding his hand in hers; she remained silent, and her head drooped on her bosom. She felt deeply that there was no answer to be given in rebuke of his natural outburst of sorrow, and so held her peace. Still she felt assured, from long experience of his character, that the words Rudiger had spoken, so unexpected at the moment, and from his lips, were not uttered without some purpose. Indeed, she herself very shrewdly guessed the end and aim of his abrupt remark. After a while; holding his hand more firmly, and raising her head to look

at his half averted face ; she answered what she believed to be his thoughts.

“Yes, Franz, we are indeed childless, and the days of hope are gone for ever. To you who have grown rich in your days of toil, and to me who have lived to be proud of, and to rejoice in your prosperity, this is a bitter trial. We are alone. Our tent is pitched amongst strangers ; we have neither kith nor kin about us. But is there none whom we can take to our hearts as a child ; to whom we can give love and an inheritance ; one who may turn to us at least in gratitude, if not in natural affection ? Can we not find such a one to comfort us in our declining years ?”

“Yes, Barbara,” exclaimed Rudiger, with sudden vivacity, “there is one at least. There is one; and it is full time that you and I set our hearts’ hunger at rest, and draw the wandering bird to our bosom ere his wings be once more outstretched for flight.”

“Christian?” murmured the Frau, in anxious interrogation.

“Yes; Christian. You have guessed my thoughts, wife. Christian, who is already my right hand, and my best counsellor in business. Why should he not become our son by adoption?”

“It would be a great blessing for him,” replied Frau Rudiger, with a marked reservation towards the selfish side of the question, though not ungraciously.

"And a comfort and stay to us, Barbara. What if we cling closely to this world's goods? We must part with them at the end. Who knows but that some far less worthy inheritor might revel in our store?"

"He is very worthy," continued the Frau, in a ruminating tone. "For one so young, he is prudent and steady; and I think honest."

"Honest as the day, Barbara."

"Suppose he should marry Winnie?"

Her husband laughed outright.

"You womenfolk see but one end in life," cried he, "and that is marriage. It is, in truth, the end we most of us come to. But if Christian should marry Winnie, what then?"

"I think she is fond of him," said

his wife, with an arch smile, but without replying to the question.

“Well, well, so be it. That is an after consideration. It need not interfere with our plan; indeed it might help it. We will not search so far into uncertainty. Let the young folks find their own hearts out, and let us trust to the future for the rest. What say you, Barbara? shall I sound Christian in this matter?”

“Yes, Franz,” replied Frau Rudiger with the utmost readiness. “You are quite right. Christian is indeed a good youth, and would be a worthy son to us. You are quite right, dear husband, as you always are. You cannot do better than follow the course you have marked out. God bless you in it!” So saying she kissed her husband on

the cheek. With a quick, exhilarated step, he left the room and made towards the workshop.

“I see it quite clearly,” said Rudiger to himself. “I have often thought of this plan, as a thing which must sooner or later come to pass. As Barbara says, it will be a good thing for Christian, and like a sensible man he will rejoice at it; but it will be a blessing for us. Already I picture to myself his surprise and delight. I will break it to him at once.”

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTIAN'S SECRET.

CHRISTIAN and Jacob, the former the young workman, the latter the still younger apprentice of Herr Rudiger, were in earnest conversation, when the Herr—to call Meister Franz Rudiger by his recognised title among his workmen and in his household—re-entered the workshop. So absorbed were the two young men in the subject of their discourse, that they did not observe the entrance of the Herr. Thus, al-

though they spoke in an undertone, the master was unable to avoid overhearing so much of their conversation, as told him that they were deeply engrossed in the future travels of Jacob.

Jacob's attention seemed to be rivetted to the words of his elder companion, with as much awe and reliance as if they were the enunciations of an oracle. Nor was this surprising. The young apprentice was of the happy age of faith and trust; and his Mentor, notwithstanding his real youth, spoke with the weight of former experience, and with a gravity and force which formed a part of his character. The master, however, who was too honest a man to play the eavesdropper, even when it could

be done openly, soon made his presence known by a short, peremptory cough. It at once brought the dialogue to a close, and set Jacob again at his work with a vigour which contrasted comically with his former inactivity.

Little as the master had overheard, and that inadvertently, of the conversation between the two young men, one word among the rest had caught his ear which jarred strangely with the project now occupying his thoughts. It was the pronoun "we," used as if Christian and Jacob were about to embark in some joint enterprise. This single word opened up a wide scope for reflection. Supposing it to indicate the intention of the young men to quit Leipsic together, this design

would, it need scarcely be said, be a serious obstacle to the realization of the project Herr Rudiger had but just disclosed to his wife. Such a contingency had vaguely occurred to him while arranging his plans, and now it seemed to start up before him at the very moment he was about to take the first step towards carrying his intention into effect.

The suspicion thus suddenly aroused, strengthened his resolution to take immediate action in the matter he had so much at heart. Bending over Christian at his bench, he said in a low voice:

“Christian, I have a word to say to you. Come to me in the counting-house.”

Then with a quicker and firmer

step than usual, he led the way through the old timber into the little office, which claimed that dignified title.

Christian was startled at the sudden summons, and exchanged a wondering glance with Jacob; then promptly followed in the footsteps of his master. As he crossed the yard, something like a pang of self-accusation flashed through his mind, for he felt that he had made a secret of a matter that was all important to Herr Rudiger; which it would have been much better to have openly discussed. He resolved at once to remedy the error.

Herr Rudiger stood by his desk as the young workman approached. Visions, long forgotten, of his own youth and early manhood flitted before his

mind's eye as he watched Christian's steady tread down the irregular walk. The hopes and fervid anticipations which had once led Franz Rudiger himself to enterprise and prosperity again lighted his eye and flushed his cheek; although the brightest of his fancies still awaited fulfilment. Fulfilment, that is to say, in the strictly literal sense in which those expectations had first lighted his imagination; but the realization of which seemed now, in another way, within his reach.

He stood leaning his elbow on the desk, with his cheek on his hand, and his eyes rivetted before him. As the frank, handsome face of Christian beamed before him, the mistrust which had for a moment clouded his brow,

floated away, and a secret consolation came over his heart.

"Well, Christian," he said cheerfully, pushing a stool towards his visitor; "come in, my son, and sit down. I must have some serious talk with you."

In this address, half anticipating the conclusion at which he aimed, the Herr tried to assist himself by the form of speech he used; but the effect upon Christian of the words "my son," was no other than that of any ordinary term of kindness. It only made the young workman more anxious to clear himself from the last taint of deception, in having hitherto concealed his proposed departure. The announcement of a "serious talk" almost made him fear that

his intentions had been discovered ; and with the exception of a "Thanks, Herr Rudiger," he seated himself with some uneasiness, in respectful silence.

"It is now some years, Christian, since you came into Leipsic?" began the master.

"Yes, sir; more than two years."

"No more? It appears to me already half a life-time."

"It has been a happy time with me," exclaimed Christian, "and has sped quickly."

"The old man's thoughts, and the young man's hopes speed not together," replied the Herr; "but I am glad to know that the time under my roof has not passed heavily with you."

"It has not, indeed, Herr Rudiger. Your roof has been a haven of peace and comfort; a shelter and a home to me, and it is on that account I grieve the more to leave it."

"Leave it!" exclaimed the master, rising from the stool on which he had seated himself. "Leave it!" he repeated with additional force, as he again fell back upon his seat.

"Yes, Herr Rudiger," replied Christian, slowly and with hesitation; for the abruptness of the exclamation, and the manner of his master, had surprised and checked him.

"Yes, I am going to leave it; at least I had thought to do so, if it please you."

"If it please me, Christian. What may that mean? I am not of your

kith or kin that I can exert authority over you." Then he added, with something of bitterness, but more of sorrow, "I am not your father."

"I know it, sir," replied Christian, with deep earnestness. "Yet there is no man living to whose authority I would so gladly yield. I have no kindred in the world, as you know, and you, dear Herr Rudiger, have been a father to me."

"Then why leave me?"

"I cannot help it."

"Whither are you going?"

"To Hamburg, with Jacob."

"To Hamburg, with Jacob," echoed the Herr slowly. "Two birds from the nest at one swoop." Then he sat silent for a time in serious thought.

"This is strange talk," he suddenly

resumed, in his old, brisk way, but with a touch of severity. "This is strange talk, Christian. You are going to leave me; me—although you say I have been as a father to you—for a strange town; and all the reason you give is that you 'cannot help it.' Why cannot you help it?"

"Hamburg is not a strange town to me," replied Christian, evasively.

"Known to you, and remembered by you best, through a weary apprenticeship and a harsh master—eh?"

"Yes, and no," replied the young man, sorrowfully yet firmly. "But"—He hesitated.

"Go on."

Christian still paused, with a finger on his lip. Then abruptly, as with

sudden resolution, he exclaimed: "Herr Rudiger, I have nothing more to say."

The master was silent also for a short time, gazing out into the timber-yard with a fixed eye, which saw nothing of what was immediately before it. At last he drew a long breath, checked it as it rose to his lips, and turned his full, expressive face, massive and honest, upon his young workman.

"Nay, then, Christian, it is for me to speak. What I have to say, I did hope to say to a more attentive listener; to one, at least, whose thoughts would respond to my words. In truth, it may be that I had better be silent; but I have that upon my heart which will find utterance through my tongue

whether I will or no. Look you, Christian, I have lived out my young days, and have grown prosperous as I have grown old. I have neither chick nor child. Friends have I on every hand; and many a young gallant with more wants than wit, would deny his own father in order to call me by that name. But I will have none of them. He to whom I will be father must have the workman's hand and will, and the master's care and forethought. Such a man I have sought; such a man would be to me my right hand, my heart's friend, my son. Such a man, Christian, I thought I had found in you; and—and—Tausend donnerwetter!" burst out the master in sudden wrath—for he could swear, sometimes,—“I find you on the wing

with one of my own fledglings, to a pitch-and-tar sea-port town. And not a word have you to say on the matter, but that you cannot help it! help it! Out upon it, Christian, the excuse is unworthy of you."

Christian's eye flashed and glowed with concentrated fire. At first it was a sudden light, soft and warm; then a flash of passionate heat; then a steady flame that beamed, bright and unflickering, upon his master's face.

"No, no, no! Not that," he exclaimed. "No, Herr, not unworthy. I did not know of your generosity. I held myself no better than as a wandering workman, with the open world before me, and house and home to seek. How could I dream that you would stretch out your hand and raise

me to be your friend, your equal, your son? I held myself free to come, or go; a poor but proud workman; strong in my own right hand and my own unshackled will. Unworthy indeed to be your son, but not unworthy in word or deed of your respect."

Herr Rudiger's face relaxed in its severity in an instant. He took Christian's out-stretched hand and pressed it firmly in his own.

"Well, well, Christian, it may be so. Perhaps I am too hasty. But it is a poor spirit which says, 'I cannot help it,' with youth and strength behind it. It is not like you, Christian, and I cannot understand you."

"Then let it stand thus," answered Christian, kindling a little; "I must

and will not help it. But no," he added; "dear Herr Rudiger, have patience with me in this matter. Think me weak and thoughtless, rash and unstable, if you will, but oh, not ungrateful; not careless or thankless for the faith and trust you have put in me."

"Do you accept the trust?" demanded the master bluntly, yet anxious and perplexed at the position in which he found himself; a position so different to that which he had expected to occupy.

"Father, I may not," said Christian solemnly.

Herr Rudiger gazed at him in silence for a moment, one hand thrust into his breast, and his thick eyebrows contracting over his dark, penetrating eyes.

“And the reason?” he asked, slowly and austere.

“Is not my own to give,” replied Christian, meeting the keen look of his master with an equally firm glance; but, at the same time, with a respect and even reverence in his manner, which took from it all power to offend.

The Herr dropped his eyes upon the ground, gave a short sigh, and let his hands fall by his side. “Thwarted, thwarted,” he muttered to himself, “ever thwarted. And for a poor, miserable secret. Bah!” He paced the little office twice or thrice, then suddenly stopped again in front of Christian, who had stood motionless.

“Well, Christian,” he cried with a

dissatisfied shrug of the shoulders, "I suppose there is no more to be said. If you will not be a son to me, keep my counsel at least, and forget that I ever made you the offer." Then he added with something of bitterness, as he stepped towards the door: "I had thought it might be worth your acceptance."

Christian made a motion of remonstrance with his hand, as the master was about to pass him, and pleaded: "Permit me one word before you go, Herr."

The worthy master checked himself, stood still, and said in a gentler tone, "Speak, Christian, I listen."

"I know," began the young man, in a low voice, "how unreasoning and how thankless I must appear. You

stretch forth your hand, and offer to raise me at one bound to a position which I could only hope to attain by the labour of a life-time. More than that; you offer me a place at your hearth, beyond price and beyond purchase. Yet I stand aloof, and can only say how thankfully and gratefully I would accept all this if it were in my power. I may not; nay, I dare not; for I have made a resolution, which however wild, however rash, however foolish, I am bound in honour to myself, if to no one else, to carry out. Pity me, Herr, if you will—I can bear pity from you—but do not think me unworthy, or ungrateful. I cut myself away from my rock of safety, to drift about on an uncertain sea. I launch my frail skiff upon a troubled ocean, and turn my

back upon the haven of peace. This may sound like the romancing of youth, rather than the staid reasoning of manhood, for I see you smile as I speak; but oh, Herr! my heart is in it, and for this once at least my heart must be my guide. Let me go then in peace and good-will. Give me your blessing, Herr—father—before I go.”

Herr Rudiger seemed about to speak.

“Yes, father!” continued the young man, with increasing emotion. “Yes, let me be your son. I, who stand alone in the world, and have revered a father’s goodness and love in you; let me turn to you, as the one upon this earth to whom I owe respect and obedience. I will obey you

in all but this. I will claim nothing from you but your love and confidence; confidence at least thus far, that I will do nothing to disgrace or wound your sense of honour. The day may come, whether I succeed or fail in my present purpose, that shall find me again by your side; not to claim that honourable and wealthy post which by present wilfulness I forfeit and abandon, but to watch by you, and help you as I can, and to do your bidding in all things. Let me be your son!"

He bowed his head before the old man, took his hand in both his own, and pressed it to his heart. Old Franz Rudiger returned the pressure with a few parting words.

"Let it be so, Christian, my son.

We will part in peace and goodwill."

He turned from him, and strode into the house. Christian stood looking after the man, whose generous offer he had rejected, with a swelling heart and the tears creeping into his eyes. But he made no attempt to follow him; no sign to show that he repented of his decision. With a long, low sigh, he murmured:

"It is hard, but it cannot be otherwise!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE VISION OF FRAU BARBARA.

AMONG the fits to which the Baumeisterinn Rudiger (geb: von Schnitzel) was subject, were fits of devination, under the influence of which the good lady was, to use a common but expressive English phrase, "as good as a witch." She had on several occasions predicted with some accuracy the occurrence of certain events in the lives of her female friends. She claimed great credit for her prophetic

powers; nor did she fail to take every opportunity of indulging in them, chiefly to her own self-glorification, and to the discomfiture of those whom she made the subject of her visions. For it must be confessed that her prophecies dwelt rather on the uncomfortable than the pleasant side of human nature.

Frau Barbara, had, however, at the bottom of all her weaknesses, a spring of pure humanity which would well up to the surface, sometimes when least expected, with a freshness and beauty which were truly delightful. On such occasions her prognostications, indulged in as a pleasant reverie, a delicious day-dream, abounded in agreeable surprises and visions of earthly happiness.

Her reflections, when her husband Franz left her with the intention of revealing his project of elevation and reward to his young workman, were this kind. The golden sunshine which sometimes lights up the mind, as from within, was upon her, and she let her imagination revel in its radiance.

All the future lay spread out in a delicious valley before her; while she, from the hill top, with her husband Franz, whom she truly loved, beside her, dispensed her smiles and bounties around.

The chief figure in the landscape was Christian, for whom she had almost a mother's affection, and close by his side fluttered the shapely outline of her hand-maid Winnie. Winnie, in fact,

was already her foster child, although not acknowledged as such in so many words. But she took the place of a child in her mistress's care, being duly fondled and corrected, as reason or whim took the upper hand. Winnie was good and handsome; as merry as a bird, and as full of frolic as a kitten.

Although but a poor cotter's daughter of Shönefeld, she had, under her mistress's instruction, acquired a manner and general habits of refinement, quite equal to her probable position. She was, therefore, so far, a perfectly eligible wife for Christian. In this relation to him Winnie stood in Frau Barbara's vision; first as the winning, wilful, and coquettish wooed one; then the coy and proudly happy bride; and

lastly the bustling, confident, tender wife, around whom moved Christian, loving, loyal and good. A pleasant fiction even if it were never to become a reality! Meanwhile Frau Barbara stood sponsor to all this happiness, although by her side there never failed the bright, honest face of Franz; but by a pardonable egotism, of which perhaps she herself was unconscious, all seemed to flow from and to concentrate around her. Then came other sounds and sights; the piping and laughter of children; rosy young cheeks, and wavy, golden locks; dimpled chubby limbs, and large lustrous eyes, and the trooping of tiny, merry feet about her knee.

The golden time wrapped her round about and wafted her onward into age;

age, bright and green, her dear old Franz still beside her, his brow wrinkled but hale, and his white locks flowing upon his shoulders. They sat now together, relieved from the cares of house and business, the crowning centre of the picture, while all around them bloomed in prosperity. The busy hum of a crowd of workmen was heard in the distance. Among them moved the thoughtful figure of Christian, erect, assiduous, and commanding; while the inner circle shone and echoed with strong, healthy life, from the swaddled baby, and rollicking, boisterous boy, to the staid, happy mother bustling in her household world. And Frau Barbara sat the queen of all; from her hand ———

A heavy step was heard in the passage.

"The devil take the foolish boy!" muttered Franz Rudiger, as he entered the room. "He has pitched me off my legs." And Frau Barbara's lovely vision began to fade into darkness.

"What is the matter, Franz?" demanded she, her eyes still moist with happy tears.

"Nothing—yet everything. I have talked to Christian, and—"

"Well?" interrogated his wife, as he suddenly came to a stand still. Her curiosity and anxiety were aroused together, for his manner was abrupt and even threatening.

"I have talked to Christian," repeated Franz, slowly and deliberately at first, and then bursting out like a cataract. "He is very grateful for my offer—of course he was sure to be

that—he is all duty and affection, indeed; but—but—it is of no use; his thoughts are on the wing; he turns his back upon Leipsic. In short, he and Jacob are off to Hamburg together, and heaven only knows if they will ever come back!”

Frau Barbara grew cold all over, and her summer landscape became a wintry desert. “Good heavens!” she exclaimed, when she had sufficiently recovered her breath; “what is the meaning of all this?”

“That is more than I can tell,” replied Franz. “There is a mystery about it quite beyond my depth. Poor Christian! I pity him, too. Nay, I respect and love the lad better than ever.”

Here he paused for an instant in

the middle of the room, which he had hitherto paced with rapid strides from end to end, as was a custom with him when much agitated.

“Poor lad, poor lad!” he repeated at least a dozen times. Then, resuming his backward and forward march, he repeated with a plunge: “Yes! by heaven, I love him all the better for it, in spite of his secret.”

“His secret?” demanded Frau Rüdiger, with a sudden frown upon her smooth forehead.

“Yes, his secret,” answered Franz, again coming to a dead stand. “It would be all right enough, if it were not for something about somebody else which he dare not, or will not tell. Some rigmarole which involves his own honour, or somebody else’s

honour; a something which is a mystery and a confusion; a—a secret in fact.”

“I hate a secret!” ejaculated Frau Barbara, with much energy. Most women hate secrets, when they are not at the bottom of them. But Frau Barbara was not the woman to be satisfied with such a termination to a project once undertaken. Finding that there was very little to be got out of Franz, as long as he perambulated the room in his present persevering, dogmatical fashion, she managed to get him into a chair; and then, seating herself beside him in another, proceeded by hard questioning to draw from him a tolerably exact account of his interview with Christian.

“It is a hard rub, certainly,” con-

cluded Franz, "to have one's gifts thrust back into one's hand, with a simple 'No, thank you;' but for all that the lad stands none the lower in my esteem. There is some hard, unmanageable, incomprehensible matter, which blocks the way; a knot in the wood that won't stand cutting out."

"Then there's a woman in it," oracularly responded Frau Barbara.

"On my conscience!" exclaimed the worthy carpenter, "I shouldn't wonder but you're right, Barbara. In that case I give it up. I did not have much hope of it at first, but if there's a woman in the business, it's out of my depth altogether."

"Of course it is," replied his wife, with some acidity. "But," she added,

in her most soothing way, "let us think no more about it, Franz. We are not going to thrust prosperity into the hands of fools and beggars in spite of them. Let us endeavour to forget the whole matter. Christian is an ungrateful simpleton; let him go his own way. It would be wrong to allow so poor a creature to thwart and annoy us"

"But," said Franz, in a tone of expostulation, "Christian is not a poor creature. No, no, Barbara; there is something more in this than we can understand. If you had heard him—"

"Well, well, dear Franz, I know he is clever, and all that; but to refuse such an offer! Let us think no more about it."

Rudiger shrugged his shoulders, and went back to his bench. So Frau Barbara, by an outward smoothness, tried to hide her own bitter anger; and partly out of thoughtfulness for her husband, feigned to treat the matter lightly.

But in her heart of hearts it was very different. She was deeply offended. Moreover, she was resolutely bent upon tracing out the cause of so strange a rejection of a generous offer. A secret to her, was simply a matter to be discovered; that there was in this case a mystery to solve was the great solace to her disappointment. "He cannot love Winnie," she reasoned to herself; and in this thought lay the bitterest sting—"or he would not leave her; unless—" And at this point

the thread became tangled; in order to clear it, it was necessary to go back to the beginning.

She knew that Christian had passed his boyhood and years of apprenticeship in Hamburg, although he was not a native of that town; but so far as she had ever heard, he had no ties of relationship there. Nor had he great cause to remember the period of his stay there with gratitude, for his master was known to be a harsh, hard man, and a stern disciplinarian. Then again this master—Herr Urlacher by name—was without children; therefore it could be no daughter of his who exercised a charm over the young carpenter, and drew him back to the old town.

Even if he had formed an attach-

ment in his youth, it was at least three years since he had set forth upon his travels from Hamburg, and it was scarcely probable that any tender feelings of which he might then have been possessed still held their influence over him. One thing was certain, he had never held any correspondence with Hamburg.

In short, all Frau Barbara's cogitations ended in negatives, which left her in more perplexity than when first started; she had not stumbled upon the slightest clue to guide her in the future. In this dilemma she resolved to take the first opportunity of attacking the young men themselves. She would first sound the weaker Jacob, and if that project failed, then Christian. She trusted to her own subtlety

and tact to draw, from one or the other of them, such information as would clear up the strange and inexplicable problem.

Frau Barbara set out upon this investigation with the clear conviction that Christian, in rejecting an obvious advantage, must have some other object in view of greater value. This was, she argued, simply human nature; one would not throw away a peach for a grape. Although not deficient in generous impulses of her own, and possessed of much deep sentiment which only required to be called into play; yet, for all ordinary occasions, her method of dealing with the circumstances around her was founded upon the simple, common-place maxims of self-interest. In these she felt secure, and

went on her way confident of success.

As for Franz Rudiger, he troubled himself no more about the matter. He was annoyed; he was in a manner angry with Christian for his refusal of an obvious advantage; but so far from regarding his conduct unfavourably, he confessed freely to himself that he had no right to find fault with it. As for Christian's motive, that was no affair of his. Christian had chosen to make a secret of his acts, and that was in itself reason enough for Rudiger to keep clear of them. He had that nice sense of honour and propriety, which taught him to respect to the uttermost the conscientious scruples of others. Frau Barbara well knew that so far from gaining any advantage by making

her husband an ally in her researches, she could adopt no better course for her own discomfiture.

“I am sorry the lad has a secret,” Franz reasoned with himself, “and perhaps I might have cause to complain that he did not make me a confidant. I dislike secrets. But after all there may be good reasons for it. One thing is quite certain, it is no affair of mine.” And there was an end of the matter as far as Franz was concerned.

CHAPTER V.

A DECLARATION OF LOVE.

IF Frau Barbara felt the utmost confidence in her own worldly wisdom, and in her gift of penetration, her maid Winnie enjoyed an equal degree of self-complacency in the depth of her innocence. That is to say, not in her innocence as implying simplicity, so much as in her want of knowledge. Winnifred Seebach, pretty and petted, and by the patronage of her mistress, exerting considerable authority

in the family, saw no difficulty whatever in the permanent conquest of either Christian or Jacob, or indeed both of those young men, if she were bent upon such an achievement. Jacob, she knew, was already bound hand and foot, and like many another vanquished man, was therefore treated with nothing more than a gracious condescension. Christian still walked in freedom, but—at least, so thought Winnie—only to be ultimately secured with a greater length of chain.

Of course, the intended departure of Christian from Leipsic was at present unknown to her. Although it was a thing thoroughly understood that Jacob would soon depart upon his travels, as a matter of municipal law which he dared not, if he would, resist, she fully

expected he would fall upon his knees, and plight his soul to her for ever before his departure. In short, being quite sure of Jacob, although cherishing an affection for him the strength of which she herself scarcely knew, she regarded his absence with comparative indifference, while she plied all her skill in the complete capture of Christian, to whom she looked up with as much respect as admiration. This was insincere and coquettish, if you will; but Winnie was not yet eighteen, and scarcely knew her own mind.

Full of the thoughts such feelings inspired, she met Jacob in the open corridor which led from the front to the back of the house. She would have passed him with a "Good morn-

ing, Jacob," uttered in a gracious tone ; more especially as she saw, at a glance, as he approached, that there was something in his look and manner which threatened a scene ; and she was not in a frame of mind just then to take a part in any performance of the kind. But Jacob made a dead stop right in front of her, and with a flushed face, stammered out some incoherent words, the meaning of which she guessed at rather than understood. Seeing that she could not pass him without rudeness, Winnie also came to a stop. Then, as Jacob seemed suddenly to have lost the power of speech, and only stood gazing at her, she repeated her salutation of " Good morning, Jacob," and waited for what might follow.

With a great sigh, heaved from the bottom of his heart, Jacob plunged at once, with blind energy, into the story of his love. Being simple hearted, and utterly without stratagem, he did not stay to unfold his emotions in any set order, but poured them out in a flood, so copious and deep, that it almost took away his breath. Like modest people in general, having, after a world of pressure brought himself to the point of action, he lost all control over his tongue, and expressed himself with an energy, not to say, violence, to which bolder men would never have attained.

In his manner of address, his fervour burst through the conventionalities of speech. Although in his boyish days he had been in the habit of addressing

Winnie, and she him, in the second person, as 'thou'—a familiarity excusable in those who have been long acquainted; in later times a certain restraint had fallen upon them, and they had always conversed in the third person plural, as is the general custom in Germany.

Now, however, Jacob's uncontrollable passion carried him over any such trifling obstacles as forms of speech. Reverting to his older and dearer habit of address, he added to the force of his language by the greater familiarity with which he expressed himself.

Winnie, although not taken at all by surprise at this sudden outburst, was touched and gratified. But being a self-possessed young lady, and more-

over, having a weakness which led her to undervalue, like many other men and women, an easy conquest, she held herself rather stiffly aloof, and deigned no further reply to Jacob's impetuous appeal, than a well affected exclamation of surprise.

"Indeed, Winnie," exclaimed Jacob, attempting to take her hand, which she quietly withdrew, "you must know I love you. You must have seen it long and long ago."

Winnie replied by a little hysterical laugh. With a slight toss of the head, she said she was "no witch; and had seen nothing of the kind."

"I have longed to tell you often and often," pursued Jacob, who in his fervour was blind to everything but the necessity of telling his love;

“but have always been”—he stumbled over the word “afraid,” which even in his heat offended his sense of manhood, and substituted the words “put off”—“by some accident or other. But now, dear, good Winnie, I must tell you all I have carried in my heart so long. Now that I must leave Leipsic; now that in a few days I must set out upon my wanderings, and may not look upon your face for many and many a day—”

“Then why do you leave at all?” interrupted Miss Winnie. She knew perfectly well that the unfortunate youth had no choice in the matter.

This unexpected interruption checked Jacob in full career. He stood for an instant with widely open eyes without uttering a word. Then his face

flushed to a deep scarlet, and he stammered :

“Oh, Winnie, you do not think I am deceiving you ! You do not think that if I had money enough and could marry you at once, I would hesitate a moment ?”

“Marry me, indeed !” exclaimed Winnie, with a toss of the head of a most decided character ; “perhaps you will first ask my leave.”

“Am I not doing so,” continued Jacob, his first impetuosity returning. “I want you to tell me that I may hope some day—that you do not dislike me—that you love me, in short, dearly as I love you ; that when I come back from my travels, and shall be a master in my native town, you will be my own, dear little wife !

Winnie, give me some hope—say something to cheer me—only one word.”

“I think you had better wait until you come back,” replied Winnie, as frigid as ice in her manner, although in spite of herself her cheek glowed to a deep rose colour.

“It may then be too late,” exclaimed Jacob, again attempting to take her hand. But she snatched it from his grasp, with an energy which was too much even for Jacob’s love-blinded senses. He stopped at once, and stood looking at her, in silence and sorrow.

“Do you then detest me?” he murmured at length.

“I think it very selfish of you, to ask me to make promises which may never be fulfilled.”

"Then you do not love me! Winnie, I do not believe it. You are deceiving yourself. Think, before you give me your final answer."

"I have never thought about the matter," was Winnie's curt reply, as she made a motion to proceed on her way.

Whether she really thought her lover would detain her, or whether she repented of her coldness towards him, certain it is that she came to a half pause; but seeing that Jacob took no step in advance, nor indeed made an effort of any kind to stop her progress, she darted past him without another word, and in a second was out of his sight.

With something between a sigh and a sob, she ejaculated to herself, when

no longer within hearing. "So that's all over!"

The unheeded exclamation found an echo in the stunned breast of Jacob, who unconsciously responded, "So, that's all over!" as he turned his weary steps towards the workshop.

There he found Christian, full of hopeful anticipations of his forthcoming journey, humming a song as he busied himself in clearing away his tools after the day's labour.

"Why, what ails thee, Jacob?" exclaimed Christian, in a cheerful voice, observing, as he could not fail to do, the dejected aspect of his friend and companion.

"Nothing," sighed Jacob, as he sat down upon a bench. But it would not do. This assumed indifference

could not conceal anything, or deceive any one. His heart was too full for continued silence. Before five minutes had elapsed he had relieved it of its burden, and told Christian the story of his long cherished love for Winnie; of her coldness, and of his despair. To Jacob's youthful heart his rebuff assumed the character of a hopeless disappointment, and unmitigated sorrow loomed before him.

A momentary shade passed over the animated face of Christian as he listened, then with a smile, he advanced to Jacob.

"Cheer up!" he exclaimed, with a friendly slap on the shoulder. "Let not a wayward girl make thy heart ache—for more than a half hour at any rate. She will repent of her coldness

before she is out of sight, and be as tender as a dove—as one of her own Leipsic pigeons—by to-morrow.”

“Dost thou think so?” inquired Jacob, with a rueful countenance.

“I’ve not the least doubt of it. My notion is that she is fond of thee, Jacob; but women are women, my young friend, whom thou wilt learn to know better as thou growest older.”

“But she gave me no hope,” added the young apprentice despondingly.

“Perhaps, my dear boy, the moment was not opportune, the place unsuited.”

“To true lovers all times and places are good.”

“When the mind is in the right cue, yes. But we are wayward creatures, we men and women, and often

reject that which is offered, to grieve over it when it is no longer in our reach. Wait till to-morrow, and the sun will shine again."

"I can never ask her again," murmured Jacob, with his head in his hands.

"Nonsense, man. 'Once denied is still untried;' thou knowest the old saw. But there is a better one: 'Thrice essayed, is toil repaid.'"

"If I could only think she loved me. I never doubted it till now."

"Then ask her again."

"She will not tell me."

"Then it is not worth knowing. Come, Jacob, this is but a little stumbling block in the road of life. Let it not throw thee off thy feet. Up, man! we have a rough road before us."

"Christian!" exclaimed Jacob, with sudden energy.

"Well?"

"Be my good friend in this trouble."

"I am so, always. What then?"

"I must know what Winnie thinks of me. I must know that she does not despise me. I have spoken to her in all love and sincerity, and she refuses to answer."

"Well?"

"Canst thou not guess my thoughts?"

"I confess that I cannot."

"Perhaps she would tell to another what she would not own to me—ask thou for me, Christian."

"Donner!" exclaimed Christian, with something of anger. "Do not take me for an old woman?"

"But thou art so earnest and so wise."

"I tell thee, Jacob, this is ridiculous. Thou must do thine own wooing. She would indeed despise thee, and not without cause, if thou could'st not press thine own suit."

"But I have done so, and she is as cold as ice."

"Then leave her alone to thaw."

"Ah, Christian, thou art not in love, and dost not know how hard it is to be in doubt!"

Christian flushed and paled, as he stood with compressed lips and fixed gaze, evidently lost for an instant in his own thoughts. But it was only for an instant. The pause of abstraction was gone as quickly as it had come, and with it the flash of anger which the proposal of Jacob had fired. He resumed his cheerful, kindly tone,

and seating himself in front of Jacob, endeavoured in a bantering way to raise his depressed thoughts.

"Thou seest, Jacob, I am neither thy sister, nor thine aunt—no, nor thy grandmother; therefore, not at all fitted to be a messenger between two lovers, if it were only from my sex."

"But thou art my good friend," cried Jacob warmly, "and as discreet as thou art true."

"Be not so sure about that, dear boy. I have not been tried by so severe a test. What if I should woo for myself, and win? What if my own heart should be too weak for the trial, and pleading its own cause, should wrest the wavering maiden from thee?"

"No, no! Christian, that could not

be. I would trust my life with thee. And I do believe Winnie loves me in spite of her coldness."

"So do I, Jacob. What a faint-hearted lover must thou be, to believe in her love, and yet to sit down and grieve over her silence."

"If she had been silent merely, I could have borne it, and still have urged my suit; but she spoke, and sharply too."

"And what said she?"

"That I had better wait till I came back."

"Then take her at her word."

"And leave her without a promise, or a token?"

"If she will not give thee any?"

"To doubt and grieve during years of absence?"

"Well, no; thou must steel thy heart to her remembrance."

"To find her lost to me for ever on my return!"

"Perhaps even so."

"No, Christian, I cannot bear it," exclaimed Jacob, springing to his feet. "I must know the best or the worst; and to thee I turn for help in my distress."

"Thou foolish boy! Dost thou think she will own to another what she will not acknowledge to thee."

"Try her, Christian."

"To make myself ridiculous, and thee despicable!"

"No, no, that cannot be."

"And if I bring thee back no answer?"

"I will bear it manfully; or throw

myself at her feet, and beg one from her own lips."

"Is that a promise?"

"It is."

"Then for this once at least," concluded Christian, with something like a sigh, "I will make a fool of myself—for thy sake. So let the matter rest for the present, and come with me to Breitenbach's to supper."

This promise of Christian's, however reluctantly given, to try to probe the heart of Winnie, cheered and comforted Jacob, and he recovered in a great measure his usual frame of mind. He shook his friend's hand again and again, and drawing on his over-coat—for the weather was cold and raw—soon stood prepared to follow him

to the proposed house of entertainment. It was necessary, however, to acquaint the good Herr of his intention to sup away from home, and to promise his return at an early hour. It would have been an unpardonable breach of discipline for the young apprentice to absent himself from the house at all without leave, or to stay out after ten o'clock without express permission. A word from Christian, whose discretion was fully relied upon, was sufficient with Herr Rudiger to procure the required licence.

The two young men were soon in the street, beneath the cold twinkling of the stars in the deep blue sky of the early spring time. Pulling the collars of their rough coats about their ears, to protect them from the keen

air, they stumbled onward over the pebbly road towards their destination.

"I also have had my courting," said Christian abruptly, when they had advanced some steps.

Jacob gave an incredulous laugh as he looked in his companion's face for information.

"I have been courting the Herr for his good will, and he mine, for—" Christian made a sudden pause, and finished his speech with the words, "for my presence."

"Does he know?" demanded Jacob, with open, wondering eyes.

"Yes, I have told him."

"He must be grieved, I'm sure."

"To the heart, I know. I am sorry for it. He was as much surprised as grieved."

"So must we all be, Christian," re-

marked Jacob, a little timidly. "What will the Frau say?"

"Little good. We may be sure of that. That does not trouble me much. But it pains me to part from the Herr."

"Why, Christian, I thought thou wert to remain here for ever and a day. We all of us thought so."

"Thank you; but I am not married to Leipsic yet."

"What has offended thee in the good old town?"

"Nothing; only that I know of an older and a better one. I tell thee, Jacob, it is not for the town, but for the master, I grieve."

"Then why go?"

"I will tell thee that in Hamburg—perhaps. But here we are at Father Breitenbach's."

CHAPTER VI.

UNDER THE "BLUE STARS."

"BREITENBACH's;" or, to speak more correctly, the Restauration of Herr Ludwig Breitenbach; was situated in a side street leading out of the Brühl. It was no pretentious hôtel. No glare of light shone from its front; no close-cropped waiters, in short jackets, with the inevitable *serviette* under their arm, hung about its door; no prominent announcement in bright colours and gold told of the delicacies within.

The Breitenbach attractions, like the riches of a mine, were all underground. From the one long window on a level with the foot-way—if the Breitenbach establishment had possessed paved foot-way, which it did not—came the signs and tokens of the entertainment within. Across this window were certain straggling letters, which, if carefully conned, would be found to make up the word "Restauration;" in the immediate neighbourhood of which a door gaped rather blankly, from the darkness within, and there was painted upon the posts in dingy red letters: "Ludwig Breitenbach. Zum Blauen Sternen. Im Keller."

It is said that from the bottom of a well one may see the stars by daylight; the "Blue Stars" of Ludwig

Breitenbach were to be sought in a cellar. The entrance was decidedly unpromising. The visitor, after groping his way through a long, dark passage, had to turn suddenly to the left, and to descend a steep, narrow shaft, provided with steps it is true, but much more like a ladder than a staircase. Supposing him to have gained the bottom of this descent without undue precipitation; that is to say, without shooting his way its whole length at a plunge, which it was a matter of practice to avoid; the guest would find himself at once in the full blaze of the "Blue Star" etincellations. Having overcome the difficulties of the passage, he would have no reason to regret the fare which awaited him at the end of his journey. Breitenbach's

was a snug, homely, and exceedingly comfortable hostelry for the class of guests that frequented it; that is to say, respectable artizans, and middle class travellers.

Its accommodation, so far as space was concerned, was limited to one large chamber, lighted from the street by the long window, on a level with the roadway on which straggled the announcement of its pretensions in the word Restauration; but it was a warm, well-appointed room, glittering with bright vessels on its numerous shelves, and exceedingly well adapted for its purpose.

Beneath the single window was a massive table extending nearly the width of the chamber; this, with numerous chairs, formed the furniture proper of

the room. This table was indeed the "festive board" of the establishment; it was not expected of the visitors to Breitenbach's that they should delect themselves elsewhere than at its broad surface. For any of the guests to have withdrawn into a corner, there to separate themselves, would have been an offence to the rest of the company. Towards the upper end of the apartment a huge, ugly mass of white delf, formed into a column of unknown architecture, rose from the ground and thrust its blunt end into the ceiling. This was the oven or stove, and although not a very sightly object, fully answered its purpose of warming the space around, even into its furthest corners. A few smoke-dried engravings, numerous oddly shaped bottles and

measures, and a guitar, were the ornaments of the walls, and helped to maintain its appearance of comfort and jollity.

Both Christian and Jacob, the latter especially, stumbled terribly down the tortuous way which led to this temple of Bacchus; for though not altogether unacquainted with the road, its difficulties were ever new. As they stood ready for a plunge at the head of the steep flight of steps which led into the region below, a strong, rich voice came rolling up towards them, singing the words of a popular song. The two young men paused to listen, as the singer gave vent to the following :

"What are the folk in strife about,
Their good or evil fate?
One calls the other fool and lout,
As simple as his mate."

"That's famous!" broke in a voice, in the momentary pause of the song.

"Silence, Father Breitenbach!" exclaimed the singer, "till I finish the stanzas So, la—

'There are some men too rich by far,
Some ragged as a tyke,
But Fate comes like a carpenter,
And planes them all alike.'

"Bravissimo! Bravo, bravissimo!" exclaimed the voice of Breitenbach, accompanied by a rattle and jingle, produced by the junction of a knife and a formidable ladle which he held in his hands. Amid these sounds of applause, Christian, followed by Jacob, made his entry into the room. Raising their hats, and with the customary evening salutation, the two young men took

their seats at the table. To their surprise there were but three persons present, including Breitenbach himself. Of his two guests, one only, the singer, was likely to attract attention. He was evidently a privileged visitor, for he sat upon the very table itself, in spite of the presence of the host, and seemed a man likely to take any sort of liberty without appearing to do so. With a pleasant smile, however, he vacated his seat upon the entrance of the two young men, and acknowledged their salutation with an easy swing of his hat. Then he proceeded to hang up the guitar he held in his hand.

He was a man between forty and fifty years of age, of shortish stature, but well knit together, and in spite of

his years, of a light, shapely figure. His hair clustered in short, thick curls around his head, beneath his travelling cap, which he had again donned. A quick, gray eye; symmetrical, if not handsome features; and an indescribable expression of innate drollery, gave interest and charm to his face. He was attired in a rough travelling cloak, thrown open at the breast. Reaching to his feet, and being drawn in at the back by a band of cloth in the Polish fashion, it gave him a somewhat military appearance. Indeed, there was an uprightness in his figure, and an ease in his motions, which, joined to his gaiety and perfect self-confidence, at once suggested the soldier.

Host Breitenbach; a small, wisen-

faced man with a very old air, though still young; greeted his new guests with his best manners. Addressing himself more particularly to Christian, he introduced the stranger as "Herr Karl Rostock, my cousin, from Hamburg."

The usual compliments were exchanged. A bond of interest was at once established between them, in the fact that the two young men were bound upon a journey to the famous Hanse Town, and that the stranger had lately left it. Moreover there was, in spite of his greater age, such a youthfulness of spirit in their new acquaintance, that the three were soon on terms of cordiality.

"Old Karl Rostock," he cried, "that's my name; or Old Karl, for short.

You see, gentlemen, a man's age is not to be reckoned by the number of years he has lived, but by the life he has led. A man may sometimes live a year in a day. Some men's lives are like a sluggish pool in a mill dam, which never seems to stir at all, unless some wild being, like myself, throws a stone into it. In others, the course of life is like the merry stream, springing among the hills; darting, flashing, and splashing, through its whole career into the sea—the sea of eternity. I'm the rattling brook. Himmel! I was a grown up man at twelve."

"Right, cousin Karl," chimed in Breitenbach, "and you have been growing younger ever since."

"You see, gentlemen, it is not a

question of living fast, or living slowly. One man may wear out his life at a gallop, and find himself out of breath at the bottom of the hill, when he ought to be standing at ease on the summit. Another may rot out in pure idleness and uselessness—a fig tree in a cellar, without fruit, without beauty, without love. You may be a race-horse, or a lazy, obstinate ass among the stubble. But to live, gentlemen, is to act; to be, is to move. One might as well be without eyes in one's head, as peep through them at the world beyond with half-opened lids. But enough of this. Tell us, father Breitenbach, what you have got for supper?"

Father Breitenbach rubbed his hands in self-congratulation, and announced

that he had a wonderfully beautiful pair of baked pigeons.

"Pair of pigeons!" exclaimed Rostock in disdain. "What do you mean by a pair?"

"And a fat soup, and potatoe dumplings," continued Breitenbach with something of the air of an injured man.

"For half a dozen big boys with teeth as sharp as a wild boar's?"

"But," pleaded the host, "I thought, cousin Karl, you had dined."

"Dined!" indignantly replied Karl, "On a thin soup, with a sprinkling of rice; a shred of rindfleish, plums, and a cake of goat's cheese! No, no, cousin, your Saxon fare is none of the richest, you must confess; but I must do you the justice to say that

I did not dine with you. Then that was at twelve o'clock, and now," consulting his watch, "it is past six. I'll tell you what, father; you shall give us your fat-soup, your baked pigeons, and potatoe dumplings, and just add a dish of tender beef-steaks with plenty of butter, to fill in the corners. That will be the thing, eh?" he added, looking briskly around; "and then perhaps our young friend there won't object to make one of the party."

"Our young friend there," was the other guest whom Christian had observed on first entering the room. Seated at one end of the table with a glass of German black beer before him, he had hitherto remained silent and unnoticed. At this invitation, however,

he turned a pair of dark, hungry eyes upon the speaker, and said in a hoarse, grating voice, but with an ugly chuckle :

“ I should rather think I would. I like good company.”

He looked a tall, skeleton of a man, as he now stood up with a weary sort of air. Though still very young, probably not much over twenty, he had an awkward stoop in the shoulders. His wolfish eyes, blunt nose, and large mouth ; his lank hair, coarse indications of beard and moustachios ; his broad teeth, yellow with tobacco juice, gave him a marked and disagreeable appearance. The way in which he was clad helped the general ill-effect. He was evidently a workman on his travels ; beneath his cloth frock-coat was visible

the dirty white blouse of the mechanic, which either for warmth, or from idleness, he had omitted to remove. On the back of his chair hung by one strap his knapsack, and his cap was perched upon his stick which stood in the corner. Having stood up for a moment, in a stooping posture, intended no doubt as an acknowledgment to the invitation to supper, he slid back into his chair, and spread out a pair of huge, bony hands upon the table before him.

"Old Karl," who knew his men at a glance, proceeded in a blunt but kindly way, to draw him out; a course quite permissible, and even customary in Germany, under the circumstances."

"Thou art on the tramp, friend?" demanded he.

"Yes," was the reply, in a somewhat surly, dissatisfied tone.

"What art thou?"

"A brewer."

"Dost thou come from afar?"

"Last from Zwickau."

"When didst thou come in?"

"This morning."

"This is not thy inn?"

"I know that," was the reply, with something of defiance; as of one caught in a falsehood, and determined to face it out.

"Ha, ha!" chuckled Rostock. "Never mind; don't be afraid; I shan't tell."

"I'm not afraid," retorted the other angrily. "I shall sleep there to-night—in the 'Little Church Yard.'"

"Good, my friend, good. Thou art

an honest lad, and wilt make all right, I have no doubt. Didst thou brew much in Zwickau?"

"Not in the town. I have been brewing at farm-houses, and small villages round about. That's the life I like; warm, snug sleeping quarters, and plenty to eat."

"And very little money," added Rostock.

"Next to nothing," said the tramp, in a rueful tone.

"Just so. One must not expect everything in this world; not all at once at any rate. What is thy name?"

"Botzen."

"Johann—Heinrich—Fritz?"

"Friedrich."

"Good. Now we have a clear coast.

My name is Karl Rostock. And so, Friedrich Botzen, seat thyself at this end of the table, for here comes Father Breitenbach with the supper."

CHAPTER VII.

SUPPER AND SONG.

VERY soon the savoury viands smoked upon the clean, white table-cloth. The small party; now increased by two worthy citizens of Leipsic, who made themselves perfectly at home in such good quarters, to which they were evidently accustomed; proceeded to discuss the meal so temptingly placed before them. Not before Rostock, however, rising to his feet, had said an earnest and reverential grace.

Not even Jacob, love-sick as he was,

had lost his appetite. The remainder of the guests, judging from the way in which they dealt with the good things before them, could have had very little upon their minds, or upon their stomachs either. The peculiar capability of the Germans to mingle sweet and sour was fully exemplified in this case; one or two of the guests heaping a weighty portion of each of the viands, and other materials for the meal, upon his plate at once.

A quick and lively conversation was kept up during the meal, of which Rostock, to whom silence seemed to be unendurable torture, monopolised the chief share. As his sallies and illustrations were usually pointed and amusing, no one was inclined to dispute his self-asserted claim to be the

lion of the party. Christian was gay and talkative; the two Leipsicers threw in a word now and then; even the tramping brewer had his coarse joke, which was not always appreciated. Jacob alone was silent; partly out of modesty, partly from the absorption of his thoughts on more tender subjects of reflection.

“Old Karl,” whose egotism invariably led him to make himself the chief figure in his pictures, though not in an offensive, and always in an entertaining way, soon let it be known that he had been a soldier; had served in the army when the French overran Germany, seized Hamburg, and endeavoured at its port, among others, to carry out the “Continental System;” a system which sought to exclude English

products from the rest of Europe.

“And a merry time it was for some of us,” he laughed. “Soldiering was of very little use in old Hamburg, when the French once got possession of the town, and so we took to smuggling. Ha, ha ! don’t I remember how once we repaired the high road with sugar.”

“With sugar?” demanded one of the Leipsicers, open-mouthed.

“Yes, with sugar, my friend. They wanted sugar, brown sugar, in Berlin, and we had it in Hamburg—stores of it. The question was how to get it through the city gates, and the military cordon of those ‘sacré Français!’ Now, there was sugar stowed away, hogshead upon hogshead, in the warehouses by the Deich Thor ; British

sugar from Jamaica, which stood as gravel in the merchant's books. You may be sure there was more than one rogue laid his finger against his nose—both French and German—and winked till the tears stood in his eyes, over the British goods which were never to be imported; or if imported were at once to be delivered up to our French masters, by them to be destroyed. Yes! Trust the mess-cook to keep his spoon out of the broth!

“However, it was found that the roads were sadly in want of repair, and certain of the burghers got the job to put them in order. So, on a certain day we broke bulk; that is, we knocked out the head of a hogshead or two; filled a cart with—what do you think—gravel? No; sugar! with just

a nice sprinkle of gravel on the top. I and a comrade, with mattock and spade, and a carter at the horse's head, made our way from the Damm Strasse to the Deich Thor, and soon came upon the French guard at the bridge-head. The sentinel challenged us at once; I was too old a soldier to be other than obedient; so I dropped spade at once, and waited for his highness the captain of the guard.

‘What have we here?’ he demanded, as he came up.

‘Gravel, Captain,’ said I, giving him a military salute, and handing our order to mend the road into his hands.

‘Gravel, heh!’ he exclaimed, driving his stick into the heap, and bringing it out all sticky with sugar grains.

If he had had but a notion of what it was, he would have sucked the stick like a child. I trembled for the venture, and for my own back, which I well knew would be the first to suffer. However, satisfied that there was nothing underneath, he struck his cane against the cart-wheel to knock off the loose gravel, as he thought, and ordered out two of the men of the guard to accompany us.

‘What for, Captain?’ I exclaimed, saluting him again.

‘To keep you at your work, *coquin*!’ he answered, laying his cane across my back as if he meant to strike, but only wiping it on my jacket.

There was no help for it; so on we trudged behind the cart, with a French bayonet on each side of us. At the

first deep wheel-rut we came to, which was not too near, as I thought, to the guard-house, I cried halt. Jumping into the cart, I set about with a good will, to shovel the sugar into the holes. I had managed before that to find out that our two mounseers knew very little German, so it was easy enough, with a word or two, to put my two comrades in the right on the matter. We went on till we had emptied the cart, and had sugared the road to Berlin, for a good German mile, as if it had been so much cake."

"And lost your venture!" exclaimed the Leipsicer, who had previously spoken.

"Not a bit of it," laughed Rostock. "The sugar was gone; there was no doubt of that; but it was just so much

dust in the eyes of the mounseers. We passed many and many a cart-load after that of our sweet gravel, which never went on to the road at all. To be sure, now and then, we sent a cart-load of real, rough ballast through the gate, and mended the road in earnest; but after the first sample, we had no guards of honour, as I called the two blue coats at our elbows. We were left to do our work at our ease; and we did it; and so we "ran" the sugar, with a bouncing sum by way of prize-money for the risk."

By the time Rostock had finished his story, the various materials of the supper had disappeared; indeed, the narrator had the faculty of eating and drinking at the same time, and not one of the guests was deficient in the

qualities of good trencher-men. The tramping brewer, indeed, bore off the palm in this exercise, devouring his food in a rapid, wolfish manner; casting ever and anon a restless eye upon whatever still remained upon the table.

He had finished his meal, or rather he had devoured all he could appropriate, long before any other one of the company. Then, having tossed off his glass of beer at a gulp, he sat with quick greedy eyes, watching the rest. Suddenly he was gone.

Rostock had ordered a glass of punch after the Hamburg fashion, and was filling his heavy wooden pipe, when casting his eyes about him, he exclaimed :

“Hulloa ! where’s the brewer ?”

Every eye sought round the room, but in vain. Cap, stick, knapsack, and man had vanished.

“Ha! ha!” crowed Rostock, “I thought as much. He didn’t ask for his bill, did he, Breitenbach?”

No, he had paid for his glass of brown beer before; and that was all.”

Rostock laughed again. “Never mind, Father,” he continued, dropping a piece of lighted tinder into the bowl of his pipe, and shutting the silver lid down with a loud snap. “I suppose he thought he was my guest, and so he was. You must look to me for his score. He certainly might have said as much as good-night; but I am afraid they did not teach him good manners at school. If he had only stayed I

should have asked him to sing us a song; he had such a musical face." And Old Karl laughed inwardly over the notion, till the tears stood in his eyes.

"The rascal!" exclaimed Breitenbach. "It would serve him right to let the father of the Herberge know of it."

"No," said Rostock, wiping away the tears; "the poor lad was hungry, with scarcely a half-penny in his pouch, I'll warrant. Hunger has very little conscience."

"Perhaps," interposed Christian, who had a pitying thought for the poor tramp, "as we have missed our travelling friend's song, Herr Rostock himself will sing us one. We heard his voice as we came in, and know it to be a good one."

All the company joined in this request, and Breitenbach, with great alacrity, unhooked the guitar, or rather lute, from the wall. Making a mock ceremonious bow to Old Karl, he extended it towards him with the words:

“Sing, Signor, sing; here is an instrument wherewith to accompany thy mellifluous voice.” Then suddenly dropping his assumed dignity, and relapsing into the colloquial, he exclaimed:

“Ach! Cousin Karl! do us the kindness to sing us ‘Three Regiments over the Rhine.’”

“Then stand aside,” said Rostock, rising from his seat, “and take away that lute. That is no instrument for a soldier. Listen, while I give you some wood-music.”

So saying, he stepped to the side of the room, which was formed by a wooden partition dividing the kitchen from the guest's apartment. He first ran his thumb across one of the panels, to try its tone, and by the vibration of the wood produced a not unmusical sound which seemed to satisfy him. Then, taking his stand with extended feet in front of the panel, and wetting both thumbs with his tongue, he ran them over the trembling wood; now in curves, now in straight lines, now in a succession of points, producing by this means a surprising combination of sounds at once thrilling and harmonious. After a brief introduction, in which he displayed great artistic method, he commenced his song, an old German ballad, accompanying

his clear, full voice by the rolling vibration of his strange instrument.

In many respects it was the most appropriate accompaniment which could be found for the slow, and somewhat monstrous melody to which the ballad was set, and its rolling, drum-like notes accorded well with the military episode it helped to illustrate. The words of the song were quaint and wild, and told a story of soldier-licence, and of soldier-vengeance, well calculated to catch the popular ear. Few ballads are more popular in Germany, especially in the Southern parts, than the song beginning:

“There came marching three regiments over the Rhine.”

Amid the applause which followed

the conclusion of the song, Christian and Jacob threw on their overcoats, and prepared to leave the tavern, for it was already time to return home. Christian insisted upon paying his quatum towards the supper of the tramping brewer. Rostock, after some demur, assented, evidently taken with the generous spirit of the young man. Christian drew him aside as he stood at the bottom of the stairs.

“Herr Rostock,” he demanded, “if I understand rightly, you will quit Leipsic again shortly for Hamburg.”

“C’est ma feuille de route,” responded Rostock, in tolerably good French.

Christian, although no French scholar, sufficiently comprehended his meaning to continue :

“I shall shortly leave Leipsic myself

for the same destination. May we travel together?"

"With all my heart."

"Where shall I find you?"

"I've got my billet here at Father Breitenbach's."

"Then I will see you again."

"Good."

"Till then, adieu!"

With a strong grip of Old Karl's hand, and the ordinary compliments to Father Breitenbach and his remaining guests, the two young men clambered up the steep staircase, and were soon in the street on their way home.

"Thou seest, Jacob," remarked Christian to his companion, "we shall not fail of a guide and good company on the road to Hamburg."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DOUBLE TOKEN.

THE Rudiger household was in a state of unusual agitation. Not outwardly, so much as inwardly. The master himself was, contrary to his wont, moody and dissatisfied; Frau Barbara was irritated and suspicious, and had plunged into social economy in consequence; Winnie, for a brief space of time at least, was anxious and low-spirited; Jacob was in love and in doubt; Christian, for reasons best known to himself, was restless and full of thought. The usual slow,

placid stream of existence flowing beneath the burghermaster's roof had become tossed and vexed by contrary winds, and now presented a ruffled, surging surface.

Christian's first thought on awaking, the morning after the supper at Breitenbach's, was of the promise he had made to Jacob to ascertain, if possible, whether Winnie loved him or not. This appeared to him a most unpromising and unpleasant undertaking. It was certain to be disagreeable in the execution, and would probably be fruitless. It was repugnant to his notions of love and courtship, and had in it besides a strong dash of the ridiculous. Moreover, Christian, in addition to his general objections to what appeared to him the impropriety of the course he

was about to take, was not without an undefined suspicion, it might have grown out of his own self-love as much as from anything in the conduct of Winnie—that he himself was not indifferent to her; a suspicion, however little he entertained it, likely to make his interposition more embarrassing. So far already had the little flirt, Winnie, effected her purpose, perhaps unconsciously, of sowing the seeds of discord between the two friends. A very little reflection showed Christian, that, having once undertaken the office of mediator, nothing remained to him but to carry it out in the most frank and loyal manner. Indeed, nothing but unreserved candour could rescue him from discomfiture, and even ridicule.

Under this conviction he sought an

early interview with Winnie. He had planned in his own mind how he should invite her into the timber-yard, under the excuse of handing over to her care a fresh collection of chips and small logs for household use. Taking care in doing this, not to disturb her in her morning duty of supplying fresh fuel to the oven, preparatory to early coffee-making by the Frau. None but Frau Rudiger herself dared to meddle with that decoction, and decide, according to the state of her mind, whether it should be weak or strong. The strength of the coffee was usually in inverse ratio to the violence of the attack; and as the attack in the present case happened to be a very strong one, the coffee was, *per causam*, miserably weak. But this by the way.

Christian had no right in the kitchen at all. It was sacred ground, from which all save the Frau and her handmaid, and such feminine help as they might require, were, by special edict, excluded. But the stone passage which led from the kitchen to the yard, and by a narrow offshoot to the workshop, was, so to say, public property. There Christian knew that by watching his opportunity, he could meet Winnie, as if by chance. There needed no artifice on his part to secure the meeting on this occasion; Winnie was unusually demonstrative, and wherever she happened to be, made her presence known by the music of her voice. Now it hummed pleasantly in the distance, as she pursued her duties in the kitchen; now rose clearly on the

ear, as she tripped along the passage to one or other of the out-offices. It was very easy to understand from the sound that Winnie was in a lively, saucy humour this morning.

"So much the better," thought Christian, as listening to the notes of her voice he followed her into the wood-yard.

"Good morning, Fräulein Winnie," said he, in something of a formal tone, as he approached the handsome maiden.

"Good morning, Herr Christian," responded Winnie, with arch gravity, but without turning towards him.

"I have had some small wood collected and packed ready for the kitchen," Christian went on. "If you wish it, and will take charge of it,

I will have it stacked in the cellar."

"By all means, and with many thanks. Where is it?"

"Here," replied the young man, walking down the yard between long rows of timber, planks and quarterings, fresh from the saw-mill, and odorous in its freshness. Then he turned off on the right, down an *allée* formed of the same material, which led them completely out of sight of the house. Winnie tripped on behind him. Upon reaching the spot where the goodly pile of household wood lay prepared, she was loud in her praises of the store.

"So thoughtful of you!" exclaimed the gratified maiden.

"Nay," returned Christian, "the praise is not due to me, but to Jacob. He began the work, and has carried it

out for the most part. Jacob is always thoughtful of you, Winnie."

Winnie opened her eyes very widely, as she ejaculated: "Indeed!"

A throb went through her heart, which, while it made it ache, called up a counter throe of pride, strong enough to enable her to bear it without a sign of pain. In fact, it was so strong that it gave a slight toss to her head, and something of sharpness to her voice as she added: "I was not aware that I was so much indebted to Jacob."

"I will not say indebted. I would rather say, if it would not offend you, that the good youth thinks he is greatly indebted to you."

"For what?"

"For being so beautiful."

Winnie started, but kept her colour. She would have laughed, but thought better, or worse, of it. Checking the smile which began to flutter about her mouth, she put on a staid look and cast her eyes upon the ground.

“Pardon me, Fräulein Winnie,” continued Christian, who having now fairly broken ground, pressed on in pursuit of his purpose. “Might I speak with you a moment; or rather, might I detain you for a word or two more?”

“Not upon that subject, I hope,” murmured Winnie, with becoming modesty.

“Not if it displeases you. But we may take one point at least for granted, and beyond discussion.”

“I do not understand you.”

“I mean the question of beauty;

and, if you will let me add, as another point, that of Jacob's love. I know," he went on rapidly, "that I have taken upon myself a very ungrateful task. I stand here on behalf of another; one who has pleaded his cause for himself, or I would not speak one word for him; one whose fears are as strong as his hopes; as with all true lovers they must be. Jacob has asked me to perform this mission for him. It is to beg, to entreat you, to give him some hope, some sign, some token, which may serve, not only as a comfort and a solace to him in his wanderings, but be the loadstone which shall draw him back again to Leipsic, the scene of his youth and of his first love."

Winnie was silent. In the first place,

because she knew not what to say in answer to an address so unexpected, and so much more fervent than the occasion seemed to require; and in the next place, because she could not find it in her heart to understand the words as they were spoken. Like most people who start with a pre-conceived idea upon any certain subject, she twisted and perverted every little incident in connection with it to support her own meaning. Whether out of vanity, or affection, it had been a secret wish of her heart that Christian—Christian the thoughtful, the wise, and the trusted—should be her captive, and come to plead his love at her feet. And now, although all he had said was clearly and distinctly an appeal on behalf of his friend, she could not, or would

not, accept it in its plain sense and persuade herself that he was not covertly pleading his own cause.

“Did Jacob ask you to say all this?” were her first words, after an awkward pause.

“He did, Winnie. He told me that yesterday, in the prospect of his early departure from Leipsic, he had betrayed the love he had so long cherished towards you, in the hope and belief that he might have merited and won its return. He found you almost silent, perhaps cold, and feared that he might in his warmth and over-anxiety have said something to offend you. Doubtful of his own words, and of his own impressions of your reception of his suit, he begged me, as his friend, to be an intermediary, if possible, be-

tween you and him. It is a difficult office, Fräulein Winnie, and I fear an unthankful one: do not let me fail in it."

"It is very kind of you," replied Winnie, still somewhat confused, for she did not see her way very clearly, "to speak on Jacob's behalf. If there were any one whose voice in such a matter would be acceptable to me, it would be yours. But—" and here she came to a dead stop.

"But you do not like to trust me with such a secret?"

"Indeed, I would not say so. I would trust you with much more than that, if—" and here she came to a stop again, with the sentence unfinished.

"If you could be sure of Jacob's sincerity?" suggested Christian. "Oh,

Winnie, do not be mistrustful of him. He is the truest, most simple-hearted fellow in the world; and is in despair lest he should leave Leipsic, without an assuring word or sign from you."

Winnie was more puzzled than ever.

"When does he leave?" she inquired, more with the intention of prolonging the conversation, than with any desire to ascertain a fact.

"In eight or ten days at the utmost."

"And then to remain away for three years; perhaps to forget his promises, and never return?"

"A word from you would bind him for ever."

"I am not at all sure of that: 'Out of sight, out of mind.'"

"But some little pledge from you; a lock of hair, a ring; the merest token would keep you in his memory."

"And so his love might hang upon a thread!"

"So do our lives, which are even as precious. And then, at the worst, there would be but a hair's breadth between you."

"It is almost a pity, Herr Christian," replied Winnie, laughing outright, "that you do not take to courting on your own account—not me, of course—you seem to understand the matter so well."

Christian laughed too, but he saw the danger upon the brink of which he stood. "I only feel," he said, "for my friend's sorrow, and therefore know how to plead his cause. Jacob

is such a good, true-hearted fellow."

"No doubt; but not more true-hearted than his friend, who has undertaken to make love for him, and who does it so well."

"Nay, I do not make love for him."

"Oh, Sir," exclaimed Winnie, holding up her fore-finger with mock gravity, while her whole face was in a glow of merriment, "do not repudiate your trust. I declare you have been making love for the last half-hour."

"As deputy, then, and in good faith."

"Oh, I do not doubt your faith, Sir. It is a very good faith, no doubt, for your friend. But," she added, laughing aloud again, "perhaps, Herr Christian, as you make love as deputy, you will have no objection to

receive the pledges you spoke of just now, in the same capacity?"

"Certainly not," answered Christian. "I am prepared fully to carry out my mission. Whatever instructions or tokens you will intrust to my care I will faithfully deliver."

"Most grave and reverend ambassador! What a blessing it must be to have so trusty a servant! But really, Christian, I have nothing to send."

"Not a word of comfort—not a sign of hope for Jacob?"

"Poor, good Jacob!—for he must be good to have so true a friend. What can I send to give him hope and comfort? Bid him be of good cheer, and hope for the best. But for his ambassador, who has of course no reward to expect; neither hope of love, nor

fear of rejection; if I might venture to offer him a token of thanks, for his faithful and generous advocacy of his friend's cause, it would be such a trifle as this; which, perhaps, in his pride he would not stoop to accept."

She held out, at only half arm's length, a small ring with a single turquoise stone; flashing at the same time a bright, laughing glance full in Christian's face, and then dropping her eyes again at his feet.

There was a mixture of drollery, of coy beauty, even of dignity, in her action, which took away from its real boldness; her natural charms were so heightened by her manner, that Christian's stout heart trembled in her presence. It was impossible to misconceive the intention of her gift; his

gallantry forbade him to reject, and his honesty to accept it. But there was a middle course. Winnie was playing a double part; the very reason she gave for the offer of her token was not the true one. That appeared clear to him. Was it then not allowable to meet her with her own arms, and play the double-dealer also ?

Thus in a flash of thought he reasoned; and so duplicity incites to its like.

“Pardon me, Fräulein Winnie,” he said, “my reward as ambassador should come from my sovereign, so to say; in this case, my good friend Jacob.”

“King Jacob, then?” replied Winnie, raising her head, and laughing again. “But it is also permitted to the other sovereign — meaning me—to mark her

sense of the labours of a good servant, when the parley is over, by a gift."

"Just so," smiled Christian; "your logic is uncontrovertible. I accept your gift, then, as ambassador to my sovereign, King Jacob." He took the ring gently from her hand, and added: "But Fräulein Winnie, since I have received this ring through my friend Jacob, is it not equally his as mine? Since you have made me the bearer of a message to him, 'to be of good cheer, and hope for the best,' may I not place it on his finger as an assurance of your good wishes?"

Winnie looked alarmed, and held up her finger; but before she could speak, a shrill voice—unusually shrill on this occasion—sounded in her ear. On looking back, she perceived the angry

face of Frau Rudiger, darting round the corner of the timber avenue in which they stood, in search of her hand-maid. With a prompt, "Yes, gnädige Frau!" and a curtsy, Winnie was away out of the wood-yard, and back again in the culinary regions in as little time as it takes to tell.

The fact was, the Frau, missing her maiden from the kitchen, had raised her voice more than once to call her to her duty. But these notes of warning had been quite unheard by the young people, preoccupied as they were by their skirmish of words; and at length Frau Barbara had sallied forth in quest of the absent Winnie. Her surprise at finding her engaged in a *tête-à-tête* with Christian was great; but the discovery allayed her displeasure. As

Winnie flitted past her, the angry expression in her countenance relaxed, her paleness became suffused with a slight flush, and she approached Christian with a smile playing about her lips. Christian, on his part, hastened to make a respectful morning salutation, as he thrust rather unceremoniously into his waistcoat pocket the ring which, up to that moment, he had held in his hand.

"So, Christian," said the Frau, with something in her tone that was too good-tempered to be a sneer, although a great deal like it; "you have been making final arrangements for your journey, I suppose?"

"With whom, madam? Pardon me, I scarcely understand you."

"Oh, I have not the least desire to be taken into your confidence. At any

rate it is not love which draws you to Hamburg; that is quite clear."

"I am at a loss to know—"

"You need not enter into any explanation to please me. There are some things which explain themselves."

"I was merely speaking to Fräulein Winnie."

"Yes, yes, certainly. I quite understand. I am not at all displeased, I assure you. It was rather early for gift rings, perhaps; but after all, quite excusable on the eve of a journey."

And with a gracious bend of the head the Frau swept back to her domestic duties of the morning, leaving Christian confused and annoyed at the termination of his interview with Winnie.

"So, Master Christian," chuckled Frau Barbara to herself, "I think I am at last on the track of your secret."

CHAPTER IX.

FRAU BARBARA AT FAULT.

"I HAVE seen Winnie," said Christian to Jacob, as they sat together sipping their early cup of coffee in a corner of the workshop.

"And what said she?" inquired Jacob, eagerly.

"Thy love is a flirt, my boy, and not worth remembering; at least, to my mind."

"But what said she, Christian? Does she hate me, love me, or despise me?"

"Thou art always in extremes, Jacob.

She does none of these things, so far as I can learn."

"But did she make no concession; give no hope?"

"She is a flirt, I tell thee, and plays double. Dost thou know this ring?"

"Yes, yes! Oh, thou good fellow, Christian, it is for me! I have seen her wear it."

"Then thou or I may wear it now; or both of us for that matter. It was not given for thee; and I will none of it."

"Give it to me, Christian, and tell me all that passed between you."

Christian told him word for word, as nearly as he could remember the conversation of the early morning.

Jacob sighed many times during the recital, and at the end gave a great

sob, and buried his head in his hands. Then he sprang up, dashed the hair from his forehead, and exclaimed: "She does *not* love me; but I will keep the ring for her sake. And now Christian," he added, in a voice still hoarse with emotion, "for the road!"

Jacob had conquered his love for the moment, and sought to bury its remembrance in hopeful anticipations of travel.

Henceforth, to the hour of their departure, the preparations for their journey occupied the whole thoughts of the two young men. The requirements of the municipal authorities, and of the police in Saxony, are multitudinous and stringent, and our travellers were too well disciplined to think of avoiding them. To minds so educated, the police regu-

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demanded something more than the primitive initiative of the tramp, bargained for the railway transit at the outset, on condition of completing the journey on foot.

The anxious investigations of Frau Rudiger require here some little more regard than they have hitherto received.

Beguiled by the pleasing hope that the way to Christian's unexplained motive for leaving Leipsic lay through the heart of Winnie, the Frau, on the first opportunity, set about questioning that discreet damsel; not at all doubting that in the confidence of lovers Christian had entrusted to her keeping the cause of his departure. The good wife began her researches in the most delicate and insinuating manner, in the

full expectation that with a little, gentle pressure, the impulsive heart of her maiden would pour out the flood of its confidence into her feminine and motherly ear. This did Frau Barbara, not out of mere vulgar curiosity, but from an intense desire to learn the motive of an act which touched so nearly and so sharply her own self-esteem. She was also actuated from a motive of real affection for Winnie. To her surprise and chagrin the result completely disappointed her expectations.

Winnie, contrary to her wont, was reserved in manner, and reticent in speech. So far was she from gratifying the curiosity of her mistress, for reasons which the reader will readily understand, that she herself was evi-

dently astonished and terrified at the new light which the Frau's gentle questioning threw upon her own case. She demurred to the fact of having given Christian the ring, without flatly denying it; but when the Frau referred to his early departure from Leipsic in company with Jacob, her colour went and came, her head swam, and but for a friendly chair beside her, which she clutched with a trembling hand, she would have fallen to the ground.

"Dear heaven, Winnie!" exclaimed the Frau, "what is the matter with thee, child?"

"Nothing," answered Winnie, stoutly, and was herself again. The Frau gained nothing by her move. Winnie took the first opportunity of darting into her little bed-chamber; making a confidant

of her pillow, she poured out her whole heart thereupon with her tears. In truth, she began to feel like a little criminal; and what was worse, a criminal who had failed in her object, and was conscious of her fault without any alloy of gratification at success.

Frau Rudiger, without losing hope, abandoned for the present any further attempt at discovery in that quarter. Out of revenge, she made a sudden onslaught upon the unsuspecting Jacob, as he entered the court-yard of the house, on his return from some outdoor occupation.

"So, Jacob," cried she, in quite a lively, spirited manner, "I hear you are to have a companion on your travels."

"Yes, madam," answered Jacob res-

pectfully, "Christian is to be with me."

"A very nice thing, too, I have no doubt, for both of you, to be gadding about the world wherever you please. But I suppose that Christian, who is rather too old for such boyish work, has some better object in view than anything that offers itself in humdrum Leipsic. It can't be for the mere pleasure of tramping up and down the country that he is going."

"No, madam; that would hardly be like Christian. But," added Jacob deferentially, "we take the rail to Berlin."

"And a very extravagant thing to do; not at all like modest, wandering boys. What is Christian going to do in Hamburg?"

Jacob stared rather rudely at this blunt question, as he answered :

“To work, madam, I suppose.”

“I suppose so, too,” tartly continued the Frau. “He is too poor to be idle. But has he no friends he is going to? No settled plan for the future? No prospect of becoming a master?”

“I really cannot say. I never thought of asking him, and he never told me.”

“Humph!” snorted the Frau, as she turned upon her heel, and re-entered the house.

At the very door of her best parlour stood Christian. This was an opportune surprise she had little expected.

“You here!” was her first exclamation. But what would have been an

angry inquiry, melted away ere she had half spoken it, short as it was, into a simple cry of surprise. The honest, calm, handsome face of Christian acted at once as a sedative upon her ruffled temper, and her curiosity at the motive of his presence assisted the result. At any rate she was calm.

Christian, in as few words as it could be said, requested the permission of an interview. The Frau, with a bend of the head which was not quite ungracious, led the way into the room.

It may be well to explain here, that the two heads of the house of Rudiger were, among the rest of the household, designated by the respective titles of the "Herr," and the "Frau;" while the former was usually addressed by that name, the latter claimed the more

modern, French appellation of "Madame." This, however, was only a compromise. Frau Rudiger had endeavoured to inoculate her servants and work-people with the more obsequious and courtly spirit of her native town, Vienna; so that she might be addressed, as the custom there is, as "gnädige Frau," "gracious mistress," on every occasion. But the blunter manner of her Saxon household would not permit them, although sufficiently polite, to stomach this phrase, so that she was forced to be content with the title of "Madame," by which Christian now addressed her,

"I wished, madame," said Christian, "to say a few words upon my departure from Leipsic."

"Heavens!" thought Frau Rudiger,

"here have I been hunting after this vexatious secret to no purpose. It now comes straight to my ear of its own accord."

With a word of affable encouragement, she motioned Christian to seat himself. In point of fact, Christian had at once perceived, when he refused the generous offer of the Herr, that the person who was the least likely to regard the act with complacency, was the Frau; that while the honest carpenter would forgive him for an unintentional disappointment, his more implacable wife might regard it as a deadly insult. Moved, therefore, by his desire to set himself right in her eyes, as well as by his gratitude for a proffered benefit, he had sought this interview. He began at once, in his own

earnest, heartfelt way, to express his obligations to both Herr and Frau for the unexpected honour and advantage they had proposed to bestow upon him, and to crave their indulgence for his apparent disregard of their generous intentions.

All this was highly gratifying to Frau Rudiger. The stateliness with which she had at first seated herself to listen soon melted into amiability; the innate respect and even affection, with which she regarded Christian, but which had been overshadowed by his recent refusal, again beamed forth in her countenance. But although Christian's explanation was highly satisfactory in one sense, it was totally wanting in another. Not a word, not a hint, did he give as to the real purport

of his journey. So that when all had been said which he seemed desirous of saying, the Frau saw there was nothing to be done but to question him directly upon the subject.

"After all, Christian," she began, "there is something wanting. Let me ask you one question: why are you going to leave us?"

"I wish to see my friends—my old friends—and to renew my acquaintance with the place in which my young days were passed."

"All very creditable to you. But I was not aware you had so many friends—and ties—in Hamburg."

"Not ties, but friends, I hope."

"And bright prospects of success—of wealth," added the Frau.

"No, madame; nothing but my open hands."

“Then it is very strange, to say the least of it, Christian. What would you have us think? One of two things we must believe—either you are very foolish, or very false.”

“False!” echoed Christian, while the colour flushed from his cheek up into the very roots of his hair. “False, madame! Foolish, perhaps, but never false.”

“No, no—I did not mean that!” exclaimed the Frau, perceiving only then the full force of the expression she had used, and regretting it on the instant.

“I beg to take my leave,” continued the young man, not hearing, or not taking heed of her negative interjections. “I have nothing more to say; no other explanation to give. Gnädige Frau von Rudiger, I have the honour

to kiss your hand." And so with a formal bow, and, for this once only, making use of the exaggerated phraseology of the lady's native city, with which he was perfectly acquainted, Christian backed out of the room, and was gone before the Frau could make any further expostulation.

That Frau Rudiger was intensely annoyed by this sudden and unexpected termination to the interview was naturally to be expected. She felt that by her hastiness she had been the cause of its abrupt close. Moreover, she was just as far off as ever from any knowledge of Christian's motives; a knowledge which it had become with her, not merely a matter of curiosity, but almost a point of honour, to discover. She felt that the door upon that side

was shut against her. And yet there was a leaven of sweetness mingled with the bitter morsel she had tasted, in the fact of the respectful consideration of Christian for her, in the avowed and evident object of his visit. She could not, in spite of herself, but respect him for his frank gratitude, and honour him even for his independence.

Nevertheless, when half an hour later, Franz Rudiger came in to dinner, she told him of the interview, without dwelling upon its conclusion; and added, that; "Christian might be quite right in what he did, but he was an uncouth, and an ungrateful youth for all that."

Franz grunted disapproval of this sentiment; but did not, in his heart, more heartily disbelieve it than she who

had given its utterance. The expression of such a sentiment by the Frau was the last little sop cast into the teeth of her own vanity.

CHAPTER X.

THE EVE OF A JOURNEY.

THE light of early morning just peeped—and that very modestly, for the day was as yet young in the year—through the narrow slits of windows which looked into the guests' chamber at father Breitenbach's. It fell upon Herr Karl Rostock, as he stood noisily engaged in cleaning and overlooking what he called his "accoutrements." That is to say, his stout walking-stick with a massive, chased silver head and ferrol; his pipe, of the North German kind,

with a flexible tube, and a bowl like a small barrel; a good English clasp-knife; and his tobacco-pouch, tinder and steel. To these might properly be added his travelling cap and cloak, which he handled with great care and tenderness. As Herr Rostock was alone, and the habit of talking was, as usual, strong upon him, he had no other resource than to address his observations to some invisible listener.

“Ah, hah!” soliloquised he. “These are my accoutrements of to-day, but I remember the time when they were the flint-lock, and the cartouche-box; when I would have given half my kit for such a little instrument as this,” shutting and opening with great gusto the English clasp-knife. “A fine time it was, too. A brisk, sharp, short, right-onward, cut-

and-thrust, devil-may-care time. Plenty of time to be shot, and sabred, and ridden down, but no time for thinking."

Then setting about the serious business of cleaning his pipe, he lightened his labour with a few lines of a soldier's song.

"There is no better life
In this world's hubble-bubble,
Than when one eats and drink,
And takes no sort of trouble."

"That's my philosophy. I have tried it in all times and seasons, and never found it to fail. A soldier could not get on without it.

"A soldier in the field,
To king and country true,
With scarce a groat in sack
Claims honour as his due.
Valleri, Vallera, Vallera !"

With such energy was the chorus of this song given, that it called up a remote echo from some inner chamber, in the small, piping voice of Breitenbach.

"So-ho, so-ho!" cried Rostock in reply, "art thou there? Give it tongue, child, give it tongue, that the little birds may hear thee."

Then, as an encouragement, he repeated the verse with redoubled vigour, and crowed again as Breitenbach gave his feeble response.

Having carefully cleaned and inspected several articles of his "kit," to use his own phrase, he came to his coat, which, holding up at arms' length, he apostrophised in the words of an old German ditty:

"Full thirty years thou'rt old, my friend,

Art still unchanged in form ;
E'er like a brother have I found thee,
And when the cannon flashed around me,
Thou hast not trembled in the storm."

"Ay, ay! that's the stuff for the young conscripts. It won't do for the old soldiers though; they know better. My old coat of the wars has gone the way of all cloth—to the rag-shop—long ago. It wouldn't hold water, or keep out wind. But this is its younger brother, and so can take all the praises of the elder—dead and gone—dead and gone!—and stand in his stead for the old song. It warms one to sing it after all. It's fine and bold, but it isn't true. Hallo, countryman!"

This last exclamation was addressed to Christian, who, unheard amid the boisterous monologue of the old soldier,

had descended the steep flight of stairs, and now entered the room. A hearty greeting followed, evidently sincere on both sides, for between these two men, so dissimilar in manners and habits of thought, there had sprung up, at once, a strong friendship. Their very dissimilarity drew the one to the other, and as their inclinations were based on mutual respect, they were so much the stronger, and more likely to endure.

"Well, Herr Rostock," asked Christian, "do we travel together?"

"With all my heart. When do you get your *feuille de route*?"

"I have it already, if that's the French for the road we take, Herr Rostock."

"Halte-là! Don't 'Herr' me. I am plain Karl Rostock to my friends. I

don't make my name a point of dignity unless I'm called out of it by those who presume upon my good nature. Call me 'Old Karl' in companionship, and I am only warm like a summer breeze; call me 'Old Karl' in anything but respect, and hough! I'm a tornado."

"There is no danger of my raising such a storm," said Christian laughing. "But to set matters straight between us, my name is Christian Grünwald."

"Good! Christian; and a very pious, Protestant name too. Then, henceforth, let me call you Christian; and you may call me what you please. When do you start?"

"To-morrow morning, at six."

"Then I'll tell you what it is, Christian. There is a scapegrace nephew of mine at

school in Halle, whom I must visit. I start to day for those learned regions, and will catch you to-morrow at the Halle Railway station. You will look out for me?"

"Certainly."

"Then that's settled. I am only sorry I cannot be at your parting feast to-night. And now, good-bye!"

And so they parted for the present.

The Abschied, or entertainment at parting, is an offering of friendship made to the wandering journeyman by his companions, upon the outset of his travels, or upon the commencement of a new journey. It varies in importance according to the estimation in which the intending wanderer is held; but he must be poor and despised indeed, to whom this tribute of affection is not

tendered in some more or less significant manner. The occasion was too important a one in the Rudiger household to be allowed to pass without special observance. Even the Frau melted, as the hour drew nigh for the departure of the two young men, and became at once gentle and generous. Indeed, when Frau Barbara did melt, the process was complete; no one could imagine that she would ever become frigid again.

In its first rude form, the present Abschied was a simple invitation from the fellow-workmen, and other intimate acquaintances of the craft, to Christian and Jacob, to drink a glass of punch at the trade herberge; this is the usual shape which this so essentially a workman's entertainment takes. But Herr

Rudiger here joined the party, and proposed that the parting-glass should be drunk in his own workshop, and asked to be allowed to contribute his share to the feast. For feast it really became; not merely a few steaming bowls of odorous liquid, but a solid banquet of roast meats, and dainty pasties, sweet and fruity, as *pièces de résistance* against the insidious draughts of pleasant, but strong drinks. In fact, there were two events to celebrate: the completion of the apprenticeship of Jacob—now Herr Jacob Lindemann—and the departure of the young journeyman in company with Christian, who was a host in himself, upon his wanderings.

The fact that Christian was about to leave Leipzig was regarded, on all hands, as a matter of wonder and regret. So

far as he was concerned, its cause remained unexplained, and to most of his friends it appeared inexplicable; for it was evident to all how high a position he held in the affairs and esteem of Herr Rudiger. The Herr himself, since the day of his interview with his young foreman, had never once alluded to the rejection of his generous proposal, and in all respects his manner towards him remained unchanged. He was the same frank, amiable, and even fatherly master he had ever been.

Now that the occasion arose, in the circumstance of the Abschied, to testify in public the esteem in which he held the young man—who seemed, with a cruel levity, to be about to abandon him, his home and his interests—he seized the opportunity to make the ex-

pression of his good-will as prominent, and as forcible as possible. He took the head of the table at the feast; he was the first to pledge the travellers, who sat by his side, one on either hand; and led with a ringing voice the Vivat-ho! which signalised the announcement of their names. Then, when he had rendered all the honour and outward expressions of kind feeling which the occasion could possibly demand, he wished the guests good-night; whispered to Christian and Jacob that he would see them in the morning ere their departure; and left the company to the boisterous hilarity which was natural to the occasion, and which his presence there, he felt, was calculated to check.

The ladies, that is to say, Frau Rudiger and her hand-maid Winnifred

Seebach, did not grace the feast with their presence. It would have been against the order of proprieties, that somewhat severe decorum, which it was the pride of the Frau to maintain in the household. But agreeable signs of their interest in the occasion were everywhere visible in the preparation and arrangement of the viands; and it was well known that the punch itself had been mixed in those exquisite proportions, and provided with the prodigality which distinguished it, by their own fair hands. Indeed, the Frau had evidently, for this occasion, cast her social economics to the winds, and allowed her naturally kind and generous nature to have full sway.

With the consciousness of this gracious consideration for their comforts

on the part of the Frau, it was not surprising that when Christian rose and asked for a "Vivat-ho!" from the company for that lady, the assembled guests should respond with an enthusiasm which made the very windows vibrate, and awoke an echo in the apartment of the Frau herself. When Jacob whispered in the ear of his elder companion: "And one for Winnie," the salvo was repeated with re-filled glasses, and "Es lebe Hoch!" rang out again with a depth, a fullness and a vigour, which proved the popularity of the toast.

Of music there was, as in all assemblages of Germans, enough to gratify all ears. Guitars were not wanting to accompany their owners in solo singing; but part music was preferred, and

choruses were the most popular of all. The last were effective without exception, but were as a whole more conspicuous for melody than sense.

And so the merry hours passed on, and it drew towards midnight, when prudence whispered to the less elated of the party that it would be well to conclude their merry-making while it was time to do so with decorum. Then with one more toast, and one more chorus, and an extemporary waltz round the chairs—a sort of “voluntary” with the feet instead of with the voice—the meeting made its adieux and departed in peace.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RING ON THE WRONG FINGER.

THE formal farewells to the two heroes of the occasion were reserved for the morning. Every one present at the feast was self-pledged, without stint or reservation, to present himself at the railway-station by five o'clock, to start the two travellers forth upon their way with the good wishes and benedictions of true friendship.

The fresh, lovely, spring morning came sooner to many, no doubt, than it was quite welcome; but to the Rudi-

ger household, at least, in spite of the unwonted festivities of the night, its advent was neither unseen nor unprepared for. All the inmates of the "Black Horse-shoe" were astir by the time the first grey glimmer of daylight spread coldly over the old city. The oven was replenished—its fire had never quite died out since the previous day; bright copper vessels were soon seen perched among its red embers; water began to simmer, and sing, and bubble; the delicious aroma of the freshly ground coffee spread itself insidiously over the whole house.

The Frau was visible and audibly jubilant, humming a pleasant tune as she busied herself with the preparation of the early breakfast. Winnie was busy, too, but silent. The master and our

two travellers made great demonstrations of liveliness against an evident tendency to lapse into a state of grave contemplation. Their minds were not so full of thought as of a contention of opposite emotions; the half revival of old recollections, with the sense of responsibility in entering upon a new enterprise.

The Frau had ordered that the early meal, now in course of preparation, should be laid out in the best parlour. It was evident the good lady had not slept off her good temper. As for the meal itself, it was a very simple affair. Plain black coffee, with milk for those who desired it; bread and butter, and a sprinkling of sweet cake.

All the household was there, with the addition of the widow, Frau Lindemann,

Jacob's mother; who, though otherwise cheerful, sat with a perpetual tear on each cheek, which either never dried up, or was constantly renewed. Herr Rudiger might laugh and joke in his best and kindest way; Jacob soothed her with brilliant hopes, and prophecies of the good fortune reserved for him: she listened, and sometimes smiled in return for their encouragements, but the two solitary tears still stood their ground.

The meal was a short and hasty one; for, as it invariably happens on such occasions, there were more things to be done than there was time conveniently to do them in. At the last all was hurry and confusion. Jacob owned no luggage but his well-filled knapsack, and this he himself was not allowed to

carry. Christian was more cumbrously provided for with trunk and valise, in addition to his pack. At length all was ready.

Those who had anything to carry—and each was eager to appropriate in his own keeping some stray portion of luggage—had already started on the road. The ladies were to make their adieux at home, together with the Herr, who moved about from one to the other in a restless way, his face smiling yet thoughtful. He seemed in his broad strength, and silent impressiveness of manner, to be the father of them all.

There was little said at parting. The Herr grasped Christian by the hand, kissed him on each cheek, and said solemnly :

“Adieu, my son. God be with you!”

Christian returned the pressure, and with a half sob echoed the good man’s words, adding:

“Keep me in your memory. Adieu, father!”

In bidding farewell to the Frau, he would have kissed her hand, but she offered him her cheek, and he saluted it reverently. The parting with Jacob, if less impressive, was equally hearty; and, indeed, afforded a pleasant opportunity of relaxing from the serious tone which, for a brief space, prevailed. Poor Frau Lindemann had scarcely a word to say. If the tear on each cheek was stationary before, it now assumed motion, and as it fell to the ground was quickly followed by another which took its vacant place.

Suddenly there was a cry of: "Where is Winnie?"

Yes, where was Winnie? No one had seen her for the last quarter of an hour. The Herr shouted "Winnie!" and the Frau, in a shrill voice—a cry is seldom melodious—echoed the call. After a time she came, in a great bustle, her face flushed from the haste she had made, or something else. Seeing all present standing waiting for her, the colour deepened still more, and she stammered out a few words, scarcely seeming to know what she had come for, or why they were there.

"Fare you well, Fräulein Winnifred," said Christian, extending his hand, as Jacob did the same. Winnie was flurried between the two hands, not knowing which to take first, and so missed them

both. It was the silliest thing in the world, yet might have been the most impressive. As it was, it was simply a blunder, and meant nothing at all. Then, not knowing what else to do, she held out both her hands, and each of her young friends took one. Somehow, while she still held Christian's hand, she threw her head back in a shy way, lest he should kiss her, which he had not attempted to do; thus she threw herself in the way of Jacob, who *did* kiss her, with a smack that was quite startling. By that time the conviction flashed upon Christian's mind that he had made a mistake, and he pressed forward to remedy it; but it was too late. With a little scream—it might have been an effort of maidenly reserve at Jacob's boldness, or it might have

been that she caught sight of a small turquoise ring upon his finger—she flitted towards the door, and was gone.

“Poor girl!” said the Master, with a half smile upon his face.

“Giddy thing!” cried the Frau, with a toss of the head.

A little while, and Christian and Jacob were at the railway-station, the double centre of a knot of boisterous, sympathetic friends. Men as they were, a kiss on each cheek, and on the lips, sealed the farewell wishes between them. Soon, snugly packed in their places, our two travellers waved their last adieux from the carriage window.

“Farewell, farewell!” cried the little crowd on the platform.

“Away!” shrieked the terrible engine, getting quite out of temper at the long

delay; then with a hoarse snort to begin with, it moved slowly out of the station, seeming to mutter in a surly way, as it passed out of sight: "Good-bye—good-bye—good-bye!"

CHAPTER XII.

MY NEPHEW GUSTAV.

THE railway from Leipsic to Berlin offers very few interesting features of scenery to the traveller along its whole line. On the Saxon portion of it, up to the frontiers of Prussia at Köthen, it lies at a dead level nearly the whole way through a desert of sand. Yet, to the young and expectant eyes of Jacob, it was a bright landscape. Lighted by the sun of youth and hope each poor shrub to him spread into a tree, each patch of brown, stunted grass into a

garden. It was the spring time of the year, and what little vegetation there was to be seen, now wore its brightest hue. But the charm which covered the arid ground with verdure; which clothed the trees with brighter green, and filled the air with light and music, found its power in that spring time of the mind and body which is the especial blessing of the young. To Christian, to whom it was no novel experience, this setting out upon a new journey was full of exhilarating pleasure. But his enjoyment was tempered by his remembrance of former travel, and sobered by reflections which, sad or cheerful, he did not communicate to his companion.

With Jacob it was different. His emotions were fresh and unalloyed by former recollections, whether of success or of dis-

couragement. The vivacity of his youthful spirit found full employment in the anticipations of the novelty and beauty of all that was about to meet his eye, or occupy his mind. There is something peculiarly affecting in the position of the young German wanderer upon his departure from home to begin long years of travel; perhaps never to re-enter his native town.

He goes forth humbly clad, poorly provided, his whole worldly wealth strapped to his back, or, in the shape of a few dollars, sewn in his girdle. The wide world is before him, and his future fortunes are contained in the hollow of his hand. He stands positively alone. But youth with its hopeful vigour; strength with its boundless confidence; so far from regarding the lonely landscape with mis-

giving, see nothing before them but a smiling, flowery land of rapture and plenty; so little estimating the task-work and privations which hem their way, that the mental prospect gleams before them as a succession of triumphs to enterprise and skill. Let us thank God for the young hearts, and the strong limbs, which are destined to conquer despair, if they do not vanquish success!

If a shade of thoughtfulness hovered for awhile round the face of Christian, it soon passed away before the radiant enjoyment of his companion. They fell to chatting over the few objects of interest which flitted before their eyes, and the prospects of success which their haven, the town of Hamburg, would afford them. All this had been considered and

discussed many times before; but it always offered old points for review, and new aspects for consideration. They were provided with letters and addresses from Herr Rudiger and others, and had no fears for the result of their journey.

Moreover, Christian stood in a character which, through all the land, was regarded with respect and consideration. He was the return wanderer. He was going home. This fact would have served him as a passport, in the absence of many technicalities of document, even in the eyes of the police; but to the minds of ordinary people, it was a high recommendation. In Hamburg, which, although not his birth-place, had been in all essential respects his early home, it would ensure

him a hearty and helpful welcome. If, therefore, an anxious shade flitted across his face at intervals, it did not arise from any doubts of his reception in the old Hanse Town.

Perhaps the elation of spirit which Jacob felt at the novelty of his situation, received an additional impetus from the circumstances of his farewell passage with Winnie. Jacob could not regard this otherwise than as a triumph. To have held her but for a moment in his arms, and have imprinted a kiss upon her cheek, was an amount of happiness which, under all the circumstances, he had never anticipated; the remembrance of it would cheer him during years of travel.

With such matters of thought and conversation, the time sped rapidly on, as they watched the low level of the

distant landscape, or saw the ground whirling away beneath their feet.

It was necessary to change carriages at Köthen. Being the frontier town, the Saxon half of the railway ends here, and the remaining portion of the road passes over Prussian ground. Here they loitered away an hour, beguiling the tedium of delay by making a vigorous attack upon some savory viands which the Frau Rudiger, their late mistress, in the unwonted exuberance of her generosity, had especially prepared for them; moistened by some drink in the shape of kümmel, with which they had taken care to provide themselves.

At length their train arrived. Seated in their places, under the officious direction of the railway servants, who looked and acted like a company or two

of soldiers let loose for the occasion, they were soon cleaving the way towards Berlin. Their progress was slower than on the Saxon side of the line, and a snail's pace compared with the rate of travelling in England. But railways were in their extreme youth in Germany at this period, and being under direct government control were managed with excessive caution, not to say fussy meddlesomeness. They stopped at Halle, an important town at some distance from the line; and as they trailed slowly along the platform, a voice that both Christian and Jacob recognized, shouted to them :

“Halte-là! Stop the cart, and give me a lift.”

It was Herr Karl Rostock, in full travelling costume; and save that he

carried no arms, bearing much the appearance of a soldier on the march; or, it would be more correct to say, like one returning from leave of absence. His ample, dark gray cloak was tightened round the waist by the cloth band at the back, which formed part of the garment itself. A square, compact knapsack was strapped behind him; in his hand he carried a piece of twisted, knarled vine stem, as a walking-stick. An Austrian *mütze* with its small top sloping from the back, and gaily braided, crowned his figure.

“Ha, ha!” he exclaimed, when he had taken his seat between Christian and Jacob, “you runaways! So, I have caught you at last. You were a march ahead of me; and I have been

running at your heels ever since you left Leipsic."

The two friends welcomed him heartily, and his appearance and manner placed him at once on good terms with his fellow passengers. In less than a quarter of an hour he was cracking jokes, and exchanging repartees, with half-a-dozen of the travellers about him.

"I did hope," said Christian, when they were once more in motion, "to have the pleasure of making the acquaintance of your nephew."

"Poor devil! You might have done that," replied Rostock with a grim look; "but he is laid up in hospital."

"In hospital! Not seriously ill, I hope?"

"No; oh no! only a flesh wound. Won't come under the surgeon's hands, I expect."

“What is it?” “How did it happen?” were the questions which fell from Christian and Jacob in the same breath.

“Oh! the simplest thing in the world,” answered Old Karl, turning to Christian. “But I’ll tell you all about it. You see, Gustav and I had been going over the old ground; that is to say, I had—had been telling him, for the fiftieth time, at least, the old story of my campaigns. He likes to hear it, poor fellow! and, of course, I’ve no objection to tell it. Well, all of a sudden: ‘Uncle Karl,’ said he, ‘I’ll tell you what it is.’

‘Well, my boy,’ I cried, ‘what is it?’

‘I shall leave the University, Uncle Karl.’

‘Of course you will—when your term is up.’ Gustav, you know, is a student

at Halle, and has taken some honours already. A clever devil, I can tell you.

‘I shall leave the University, Uncle Karl,’ said he.

‘Of course you will,’ I returned.

‘Now, Uncle Karl.’

‘Bosh!’ I cried.

‘At once, Uncle.’

‘What do you mean, Gustav?’

‘I shall go with you to Hamburg, Uncle Karl,’ he answered, with the quietest smile in the world. Oh! he is a cool fellow, is Gustav.

‘Are you mad?’ I asked.

‘No, only sick.’

‘Then take some Dutch tea, or a small dose of camomile.’

‘I’m sick of the University, Uncle Karl, and I won’t stop in it.’

‘You’re a fool,’ I said.

‘Thank you, Uncle Karl. We are both of the same family, I believe.’

‘What is it you want, Gustav?’

‘I want something different to what I’ve got Uncle. I want a change.’

‘I’ll give you a hiding, Gustav,’ said I. ‘You never had that before.’

“The rascal laughed till the tears stood in his eyes. Gustave is a strapping fellow, I can tell you. Five feet ten in his stockings, and as broad as a house, although he is not yet eighteen.

‘What!’ cried I, quite seriously, ‘you would desert your colours?’

‘We have no colours, Uncle, I wish we had. I would fight for them to the death.’ He is a brave fellow, is Gustav!

‘But,’ said I, ‘you would shirk your *collegium*; throw away your *gradus*; and

bolt out of the *curriculum*?' That was all the Latin I knew, and I gave it him all at once.

'I am sick of the whole lot, Uncle,' replied he, once for all; 'and I won't stop in it.'

'Himmel! you *shall* stop in it.' I was wrong, you know; I was quite wrong. With a gentle word I could have turned the big fellow about like a baby. But I must needs take to hectoring.

'I tell you, Uncle Karl,' said he, standing up quite boldly, 'I shall leave the University. I will go to the Professor myself, and tell him so.'

'I'll lock you up in your room, Gustav.'

'Then I'll jump out of window.'

"I was at my wit's ends. At length I hit upon a plan. 'Look you, Gustav,'

said I, 'you want to do a foolish thing, and I mean to try and prevent you. I'll fight you for it.'

'How, Uncle Karl?'

'Hand down the swords.'

'With all my heart.'

"In a moment we both stood armed, face to face; each with a swinging cavalry sabre in his hand.

'First blood,' said I.

'Good!'

'*En garde!*' And at it we went. Now, I know something about sword-play, and so does Gustav—a little; and we had a nice little bout. The room was very small to be sure, and there was some danger to the furniture. It was really delightful to see Gustav's play. It was sharp and quick, and I had my work to do with eye and hand to keep myself

safe. Thunder! how we worked away! A month's such practice, and I don't know that I should care to tackle Gustav at all. He tried his hardest to shave me, and I gave him elbow-room enough for a time; but when it began to get too hot, I went in and finished him.'

'Finished him!' exclaimed Jacob, open-mouthed.

'Yes; settled the matter at a stroke. The neatest little slice off his right ear you ever saw. He bled like a pig.'

'Played out!' cried I. 'Look to your ears.'

'That's true!' said Gustav, quite chapfallen, as he dropped his point. But it was only for a moment. He roused up like a lion; began to smile, and then laughed outright.

'You had me then, Uncle, but I

think I wasn't far off you once or twice."

'A close shave, Gustav. But a miss is as good as a mile. Are you satisfied?'

'Quite satisfied, Uncle Karl. This has done me good. I havn't had such a bout a long while.'

"He looked so handsome—he is a handsome fellow—I couldn't help giving him a hug. I think there was a tear in his eye, but I wouldn't see it; indeed, I don't know that my own eyesight was quite clear.

'Now then,' said I, quite briskly, 'place yourself under the doctor's hands, and consider yourself confined to your room.'

'I must see you to the station, Uncle,' said he.

'Not a step. You are invalided.'

"And then I set-to and stopped the

bleeding; bound up the wound, and made him as nice a little ear-cowl as ever you saw. I've been on hospital duty before now, and would stick at nothing in the doctoring way, short of an amputation. I thought at first I should have some trouble to keep him in-doors; but no, he was as gentle as a lamb, and did all I bade him.

When I was going away :

‘What shall I do with this, Uncle?’ said he.

‘What is it, Gustav?’

‘I found it in the room, Uncle.’

“By Jove! it was the snip off his ear.

‘I think it ought to have decent burial, Gustav.’

‘Just the thing!’ he cried, as gleeful as a child. ‘Let’s go and bury it in the garden.’

“And away we went like two babies, and dug a grave, and buried it, and set a stone up over it. We didn’t say any prayers, but I fired a pistol over its grave as a mark of honour, because it had been cut off with a sword, by a soldier. All this had put Gustav in such good humour, that I had no difficulty in parting with him. When I left him, he was already anticipating with pleasure the return to his class. So that’s how it came about that my nephew Gustav got into hospital. I went myself to the professor, and reported him on the sick list—a slight attack of fever and a bad ear-ache.”

CHAPTER XIII.

BECKONING WITH MINE HOST.

As the train panting and fuming on its course, drew nearer towards Berlin, the country assumed a more cultivated and interesting aspect. Sometimes from a height the travellers looked down upon well-farmed and flourishing fields; while distant towns, glittering in white and red, and the quaint church steeples piercing the clear air, gave the landscape a prosperous appearance. Sometimes, they cleaved their way, as it were, through dense pine woods, and were

buried in its dark foliage ; and now again they emerged from the shadow of the forest on to the open, half sandy plain.

The hot, thirsty engine which drew them went screeching and panting into the railway terminus at Berlin soon after mid-day.

After passing safely through the double cordon of police, royal and municipal, which protected this entrance into the capital, the travellers proceeded through the city to their hostelry. Jacob gazed with wonder and delight upon the broad streets and handsome houses which met their view on every side ; he thought the road interminable to the herberge, where both he and Christian were compelled to lodge. Both young men, as their credentials of travels, held only wander-books, a modified passport, which

marked their social status as workmen, and materially restricted their liberty of action. To Jacob this restriction seemed perfectly right and natural; and although Christian would have preferred, and might probably have succeeded in carrying out a different arrangement, out of regard to his companion, and from a sort of traditional reverence for the document under the protection of which he had first started upon his travels, he did not seek to evade the rather disagreeable penalty which the possession of a wander-book imposed, of lodging at the trade herberge.

With Herr Rostock, it was a perfect matter of choice. Had he been traveling alone, he would doubtless have availed himself of his means and position to choose the hotel most agreeable

to him; but in this case he looked upon it as a point of honour, and a matter of good fellowship, to take up his quarters with his travelling companions.

"I shall sleep and live with you at the herberge," said he, in answer to Christian's remonstrances. "A bad comrade is a bad fellow. I sum him up in three words under the letter S: solitary, sulky, and selfish; and I was never any one of these. Besides, it will be quite a treat to me, in reminding me of my campaigning days. Don't you see, my dear fellow, when one is at home one has to be formal, and stiff; one has to mind one's P's and Q's in order to be respectable. But when one is abroad, out of the full glare of one's neighbours' eyes, one can pitch formality, and what some

men call decorum to the devil; and be as careless, as unfettered, and as comfortable as one pleases. One is not always 'at home' at home, I can tell you. And now let us see what your herberge's host has got in his larder."

In one respect, at least, our travellers had been reckoning literally without their host. When they arrived at the herberge—a dismal, dirty, and generally most unpromising hostelry in external appearance—they found there was nothing to be had but bread and cheese, beer, and kümmel. As the mid-day meal had been long since dispatched, it was quite out of the orthodox order of proceedings to prepare anything for chance travellers.

"People who want to dine here should come at proper hours," growled

the landlord, who, to judge from his appearance, might just have dropped the lapstone which seemed properly to belong to him.

“But have you nothing cold?” demanded Rostock.

“Not a scrap.”

“And nothing to cook?”

“We don’t cook here till supper-time.”

“Come, come, mine host of the ‘Crab-Tree,’—isn’t that the sign of your house? If it is not, it ought to be—you must remember we have just come by rail from Leipsic, and have had nothing to eat worth speaking of since daybreak.”

“All the worse for you,” mumbled mine host. Then relenting a little beneath the aspect of his military-looking guest, whose manner and appear-

ance he did not quite relish, he added :

“There’s a potatoe-salad you can have with your bread and beer, if you like it.”

“Donner and Doria !” shouted Rostock. “What do you mean by offering a potatoe-salad to three hungry men ? Is there nothing better to be had in this house for love or money ? Look here, I’m an old soldier, and never put up with chopped hay, when I can get beans. I want to quarrel with no man to-day ; but I’ve served under no less a commander than his Excellency the Field Marshal Von Blücher himself, and I’ll not be sent away starving from any inn in all Berlin. There !” and he flung down a Prussian dollar as he spoke, “I want

dinner for three gentlemen; and let it be good, hot, and well served. Here are more of the same sort;" and he chinked a well-filled purse before the very nose of the astonished landlord. "Let us have a bottle of Rosenheimer to begin with."

Without another word he stalked into the best room, followed by Christian and Jacob, while the host and his electrified household, as if acting under a spell, set about preparing in all haste a really good dinner. It was served up with a celerity which surprised even Old Karl. Indeed, he relented so completely under the influence of the good fare, that at the second bottle of wine he called up "Old Porcupine," as he styled our host, to take a glass with them; remarking drily, that "if it *was*

poison, they might as well take share and share alike."

The wine, however, was good. The landlord, under the joint influence of money, and an imperious guest, who knew what he wanted, and would have it, had become, if not polite, at least as civil and brisk as it was in his nature to be. He even indulged in his little joke over his customer's wine. But on one point he was unbending. He would by no means allow Herr Karl Rostock to sleep in the same dormitory with the *handwerksburschen*.

"That would not be becoming," he said; "no, no."

As the said *handwerksburschen*, or workmen, were allotted a long loft over the stable as their bed-room, and slept two in a bed, it might be a question whether Old Karl in this case was

much to be pitied on account of his exclusion from such quarters. But it was also a question of privilege. The *handwerksburschen* could claim as a right certain accommodation at a fixed price at his herberge. Although, on the one hand, he was compelled to submit to something like restraint in the matter of lodging; yet, on the other, it might be said to be his privilege to sleep in a stable loft, two in a bed. To this privilege, Herr Karl Rostock had no claim, and the host would not concede it to him. When, therefore, having disposed of their dinner, the three travellers proceeded to the common room, it was Christian and Jacob only who took their places there by subscriptive right. Herr Rostock might be regarded as a kindly intruder, or at best a self-invited guest.

Old Karl, however, was not the man to play a subordinate part in such company. Before long he had gathered about him the liveliest spirits there, had organised a chorus, and was dispensing Berlin beer to those around.

Bed time came at eight o'clock, and the motley little herd collected together, under the leadership of the barman. As they straggled across the open yard to their place of rest, Rostock stood upon the door-step, and chanted a farewell in the last words of Gerhard's A. B. C. love song :

“ And last, Y, Z ;

So now to bed !

Fast falls the even dew,

I may not be with you,

E'en though on wings I sped ;

So now to bed !”

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE ROAD.

It was no part of our travellers' intention to wile away the time in the Prussian capital. Herr Rostock was in haste to return home; Christian had especial reasons which urged him to reach the great Northern sea-port as early as possible; and Jacob, who doubtless might readily have found occupation in Berlin, to his own profit and amusement, would on no account part company with his friend. Of course it was necessary, with due regard to the

position and finances of Jacob to make their way hence to Hamburg on foot, some two hundred miles distant. This would occupy them ten days or a fortnight, and on that account it was the more necessary to spend as little time as possible in Berlin. Still the great capital was not to be passed through at a canter.

Two days were spent in that most wearisome of all pleasures, "sight-seeing," in the shape of visits to the chief public buildings, and monuments. On the third day our travellers would have set out upon their journey had it not been for the police. The latter in their zeal for the public security, as in opposition to individual convenience, put so many obstructions in their way, that it was only on the morning of the

fourth day, that they fairly stepped on to the broad high road.

They were in high spirits, and in full marching order. Herr Rostock was equipped in a loose tunic, his military great coat strapped on his knapsack; his two companions wore the traditional clean white kittel, or blouse, of the wandering boys. The air of the early spring morning—it was now approaching the middle of April—although keen, was fresh and invigorating. The sense of unalloyed freedom which animated their hearts, rendered more pleasing from their recent experience of the Prussian police, gave elasticity to their limbs.

“Now, friend Jacob,” cried Rostock, “art thou fully provided with the essential requisites of the tramp?”

"I believe so, Herr Rostock. What are they?"

"A stick, a knife, and a yard of string."

"A stick, and a knife have I, but I will not answer for the string. What should I do with it."

"Ah, ha! friend Jacob, now do I see how unlearned and unskilled thou art in the ways of free life on the road. Thou art an absolute baby. Let me instruct thee. Thy stick hath three purposes: First, to assist thee on thy march; second, to keep off the dogs which will inevitably howl at thy heels at every village through which thou may'st pass; third, to dig thee a hole under a beech tree for thy feet, in the event, which is very likely to happen, of thy having no roof, some night, but the free air over thy head."

"I will not fail to use it for these purposes," laughed Jacob; "or any other for which I may find it of use."

"For thy knife," continued Rostock gravely, "it hath also three especial uses. It shall serve thee for thy chief helpmate at all thy meals, the more especially when thy host may be short of cutlery; with it shalt thou test the softness of the pine board on which it may be thy lot to sleep; lastly, it shall help thee to a juicy slice of the bark of the first fresh, young tree on thy road, when thou art a-hungered."

"I shall not forget," laughed Jacob again; "and the string?"

"With the string shalt thou attach thy thumb to the bed rail, or to the most convenient tree or paling, to rouse thee betimes in the morning; further-

more, it shall tie on the sole of thy shoe, when the time shall come that that useful portion of foot clothing shall take upon itself to part from the upper leather.

“Well?” inquired Jacob, seeing that Rostock made a pause. “Has it no other uses?”

“It hath one other use of great importance.”

“And what is that?”

“To hang thyself with, Jacob, when it shall come to the worst, and nothing else will avail thee.”

“A sorry end to a poor yard of string would that be. A tramp must have a happy life of it, according to your catalogue, Herr Rostock. Heaven help me from becoming such a tag to a short rope.”

“Amen, Jacob! and now keep step, lad, while I sing you the ‘Old Dessauer March,’ to help us on our way.”

With such chat, and an occasional song from one or other of the foot-travellers, to which his companions gave a hearty chorus, they pressed on their road, and made daily great progress. So they passed through Spandau, Keritz, and Wüsterhausen; making no stay at any of these towns, further than to take necessary refreshment and rest; and came by easy stages to Perleberg, the frontier town on the Prussian side, adjoining the duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

It was a notable circumstance with regard to Rostock, that he endeavoured, on all occasions, to put up at the best inn in the village, or town, in which they stayed

for the night. As foot-travellers this was not always possible, for mine host of the Black Eagle, or the City of Berlin, as it might be, had, as a rule, no liking for tramps; his first impulse was to direct such visitors to the next tavern. But Rostock had an easy, self-confident way with him, which overcame much opposition. He had a manner of appealing to the weak side of those with whom he came in contact, either by winning words, or direct bullying, which usually gained him his object. Moreover, for foot-travellers, our three friends were decidedly a superior company. Thus, with few exceptions, when the accommodation was miserably deficient in itself, they fared and lodged well upon the road, and set out each day upon their journey with gaiety and vigour.

“Eat well, and sleep well,” said Rostock, “and what can harm you? The best physic for the mind is that which helps and comforts the body. I seek the best out of motives of economy; the best is the cheapest all the world over.”

With all this, Old Karl never permitted himself to indulge to excess in the pleasures of the table. “I love all the good things of this world,” he would say, “but it does not follow that I should misuse them. He is either a glutton, or a ninny, who does not know when he has had enough.”

The first to rise in the morning, he would be out in the cold air, cleaning his “accoutrements,” while his companions were still in bed. His inexhaustible cheerfulness, and never failing good sense, helped

them to overcome much weariness, and assisted them in many difficulties. Always ready with his jest, or his song, he rendered the bright weather even more gay, and made the gloom less depressing. If the sun shone in the clear, spring air when they commenced their march in the morning, he would exclaim :

“ God never sends his children forth, but He sends fine weather with them.”

If the sky was overcast with stormy clouds, he would say with a gay laugh :

“ If there’s enough blue in the sky to make a man a waistcoat, it will not be long before you will find sufficient to cut out a whole suit.”

As the travellers came into Perleberg on Saturday night, they resolved, by tacit agreement, to stay and rest in the town over the Sunday. They heard the morning

service in the old church; the remainder of the day they spent quietly; partly in the market-place with its stone statue, whose lineaments, if defaced by time, had gained in distinctness under the fitful light of tradition; or among the pleasant paths, and in the shadows of the trees, fresh and beautiful in their early leaf, which bordered the town. The day passed in peace and rest, and found them on the Monday morning ready, with renewed vigour, to commence their journey.

“Come!” cried Rostock, as they passed through the High Street, “let us give them a taste of our accomplishments before we leave them; let them know we have some music in our pipes.”

And in his strong, rich voice, he led off with a well-known tramps’ song, commencing :

"On foot am I both lithe and strong,
And through the wide world tramp along.
And he who would my comrade be,
Must step out well on road and lea,
Or else he's not the one for me.

Juck-he, juck-he, juck-he!"

Christian and Jacob joined heartily in chorus. Many a face smiled at them from windows, and many a voice wished them "Good speed!" as they passed by.

CHAPTER XV.

NEWS OF OLD FRIENDS.

THEY were soon clear of the small town, and came into the open country. The level nature of the landscape, and the sandy character of the soil, which did not permit of a luxurious vegetation, presented few objects of interest. Jacob, absorbed in home recollections, in which were conjured up many a scene peopled with friends and acquaintances—among whom we may be sure Winnie played a conspicuous part—had outstripped his companions on the road. So pre-occupied

was he, that he seemed unconscious of the distance which already separated them, and neither Christian nor Rostock made any attempt to recal him to himself. Indeed, Christian availed himself of the opportunity to seek for information from his companion upon a subject which most nearly interested him.

“You have lived long in Hamburg,” he remarked, “and must know it well, Herr Rostock?”

It may be observed that although Old Karl had given him many invitations, so to speak, to adopt a style of language of the utmost familiarity, and had even addressed him in the second person singular, Christian had steadily refused to follow this example. Whilst cordial and even affectionate in his manner towards

his eccentric companion, he preserved in their conversation the usual form of address. In fact their intercourse, although of the most frank character, was regulated by Christian, and quietly acquiesced in by Rostock, on terms of respectful consideration.

“Know Hamburg!” exclaimed Rostock, in answer to Christian’s question, “there’s not a street, or lane, that I don’t know from end to end. I was born there to begin with. From Stein Thor to Altona, from the Alster to the Vorsetzen, I know every inch of it.”

“I think I could once almost say as much,” said Christian. “But I have not set foot in the town for more than three years, and know not what changes may have taken place. Is it much altered?”

“Scarce a stick, or stone, in the good

old town itself. Here and there an old house comes to the ground, and we build up a new one. We extend a little in the suburbs; but on the water-side—my stars! 'tis there we stretch ourselves at full length."

"New quays—new harbours?"

"Yes; there lies our money. Stuben Huck, and its neighbourhood, is not savoury; but money grows there like duckweed in a pond. But the new quays are further down stream towards Altona."

"The Shaar Market will scarcely have suffered any change since I left it, I suppose?"

"Not the slightest. I could swear to every house in it for the last thirty years, at least, and know every pebble in its pavement."

"I have trod it often and often," mused Christian.

"Pots Himmel! and so have I. When I am at home, I pass through it every day of my life on my way to the Vorsetzen. They know me on the Vorsetzen."

"I should have a friend in the Shaar Market, if he be not dead, or passed into other lands: which is not likely."

"Might I ask his name?"

"His name was Blitz."

"Anacharsis Blitz?"

"Yes!" laughed Christian. "He had a terrible name for a quiet man."

"Blitz by name, short dip by nature. Yes, that's the man. He was alive, and in his own box when I left Hamburg."

"I am glad of that. I think he will not have forgotten me."

"They say, 'Birds of a feather flock

together,' but I have not found it so. I find rather that, in this life, the pigeon and the kite, the dove and the hawk, keep company; at least, so long as it suits the convenience of Messrs. Hawk and Kite. Blitz, now, who is in his nature the very opposite of his name, has made up with a posse of wild Englishmen, who lodge in his house; machinists they are, who have come to build steam-ships for the Elbe; as loose a set of harum-scarum fellows as ever lived. They turn his house inside out; but he seems to be well enough pleased."

"Poor soul! we used to call him 'Anarchy Blitz.' I suppose his wife is alive?"

"Dead—dead, good woman! Died out of pure vexation, because she could not

fall out with her husband. Blitz never raised his voice, or his finger, in opposition to her, and that killed her. To be sure, she used to quarrel with her neighbours all round; but there was little consolation in that, when the one being with whom she had a positive right to dispute, could never be brought to say an angry word; although she would add to the sharpness of her tongue, an occasional cuff, or the forcible abduction of a lock of his hair."

"Not exactly a love lock! but I should not be surprised to hear that he grieved at her loss."

"Quite inconsolable! Wears perpetual mourning; cites her as an example of womanly fortitude and patience under suffering. He would canonise her, if he

could, as a saintly epitome of gentleness and self-control."

"Who keeps house for him, then?"

"An old virago, who mumbles and rails alternately from morning to night. Between this old damsel, his servant, and the Englishmen his lodgers, poor Blitz is in foul weather all day; and all night too, for that matter."

Christian uttered some words of commiseration, and continued silent for a time, as the two travellers strode forward in their regular, well-measured pace.

Jacob, still pre-occupied with his own thoughts, marched on at some distance a-head.

"Like to Unlike, that's my notion," resumed Rostock. "It's the very principle of human nature to seek that which

is different to itself. The best friend, now, little Blitz has, no more resembles him, than a pine nut does a hazel stem. Blitz is as round as a pea, and as plump as a baby—so much for his easy temper—while his friend Urlacher—”

“Urlacher !” exclaimed Christian.

“Yes, Urlacher,” continued Rostock, scarcely noticing the interruption, “is as spare, hard, and stiff as a ramrod. So much for *his* temper.”

“Do you mean Herr Moritz Urlacher, also of the Shaar Market ?” inquired Christian, with evident interest.

“There is but one Urlacher that I know of, and I think his name is Moritz; a tall, gaunt man, with stiff, dark grey hair, and a fiery eye.”

“Yes ?”

“He also used to live in the Shaar

Market; but he moved last Flitting Day to the Deich Strasse, and is now my next door neighbour."

"Left the old house!" said Christian, to himself, rather than to his companion.

"It must be the same. He is a sharp, severe man in outward look and manner, but I doubt if his harshness is more than skin deep."

"Does he not limp slightly on the right foot?"

"He does, and carries a stick. There is a deep scar on his forehead."

Christian started, and a look, almost of terror, overshadowed his face for an instant.

"Over the left eyebrow?" he demanded, almost in a whisper.

"Just so; it must have been from a deep, sharp wound, and the scar is a thing of a life-time."

Christian sighed, and his head drooped for an instant. Then he raised himself, and spoke in a slow, measured manner, as if communing with himself.

"Yes. I know it well. It is he, indeed! It *was* a deep, sharp wound, and the scar *is* a thing of a life-time. Does he live alone?"

"No; his daughter is with him."

"He has no daughter—no child."

"That may be. I peer into no man's family secrets; but when he moved into the Deich Strasse, he brought with him an old woman servant, and a young girl, a woman indeed, whom all men regard as his daughter."

"*She* living with him! It must be Amalie!" muttered Christian.

"That is her name. Whether she be his daughter or not, she is the comfort

of the good man's house, and the darling of his heart."

"Is she not very beautiful?"

"As beautiful as the day, and as good as she is beautiful. We thought it part of the man's own hardness that he should bring such a delicate flower down among the pitch and slime of the Deich, and we all pitied her. But, Himmel! she is one who asks pity of no man, and wins love from everybody. Although as stately as a duchess, she is as gentle, and tender—ay, and at times as gay, as a bird. It is of her own free will—her determination in fact—that she lives with Herr Urlacher. We all regard him as her adopted father, and she never addresses him by any other name. For his part, I know he would gladly lodge his darling in some snug, sunshiny nest

in the suburbs, but she will not hear of it. It is her place, she says, to be by his side. By my faith! she seems to thrive upon the unsavoury air and damp mists of the Deich."

"Dear, good, beautiful Amalie!" exclaimed Christian, in a fervent voice, and without the least restraint; while there glistened tears of pleasure in his eyes.

Rostock halted in wonder at the tone and manner of the exclamation, and looked with earnest curiosity at his young companion. At this moment, they saw that they were within a few paces of Jacob, who stood resting on his stick, waiting for them to come up. Nothing more was said at that time; but the subject of their conversation was revived more than once on future occasions.

CHAPTER XVI.

BOTZEN, THE TRAMP.

HITHERTO the weather had befriended our travellers on their march. It had been cold and windy in the day time, with sometimes a slight frost at night; but it had been dry and invigorating, with occasional bursts of warm sunshine. Now, however, there came a change; a sharp sleet came driving with the wind, filling every corner with its icy moisture, blinding their eyes, and drenching them to the skin. On the second day of this weather, Rostock counselled

a bivouac, as he called it, at the first public-house, and his advice was not unwillingly carried out. They found rest, and a warm place by the side of the huge clumsy oven, covered with its white Dutch tiles. There they listened to the incessant pattering of the rain, and peered occasionally at the long, slanting shower through the dingy window panes. Rostock never grew tired of smoking, but this was a pastime of which his younger friends soon wearied; and there was absolutely nothing at the rude inn, at which they had taken up their quarters, which could serve as a means of in-door recreation.

Jacob, with his easy disposition, acquiesced readily enough in this break in their progress, but Christian winced and fretted under the delay. A notable

change had come over him since his conversation with Rostock two days before. Until then, he had pursued his way in a steady, methodical fashion; had evidently enjoyed whatever pleasures their manner of travelling afforded; had met the discomforts of road and wayside inn with patience and even gaiety. He had sung his song with the rest; had beguiled the way in pleasant converse with Rostock; had had his jest, or affectionate word of comfort for Jacob, at every incident of the road. But since those few words which had told him of the position of affairs in Hamburg, he had grown severely thoughtful, silent, and irritable at every check which intervened between them and the end of their journey.

While Rostock sat by the oven and

smoked his pipe in silence—a most unusual occurrence; while Jacob busied himself in re-arranging the contents of his knapsack, Christian leaned by the window frame, and looked at the cheerless prospect of pelting rain and dull road, or walked rapidly from side to side of the room, in undisguised impatience. Suddenly the window was darkened, for an instant, by a passing figure. Rostock sprang to his feet, and exclaimed :

“Halloa! there’s the brewer?”

“What brewer?” demanded Christian.

“Our old friend of Breitenbach’s, who vanished without paying his score.”

The next moment unmistakable tokens of a dispute were heard outside. It soon became evident that the new guest, who-

ever he might be, was not a welcome one ; that it was only a question whether he should be turned away from the door or lodged, as a compromise, in the barn. Rostock, who was never happy out of a quarrel, if the scene of it only lay within a convenient distance, made his way at once to the outer door. Christian and Jacob followed.

“Let me come in and dry my clothes. I shall report to the police if you don’t,” half whined, half bullied a voice, which, although they had heard it only once before, they all readily recognised.

“Thou dog ! dost thou talk to me in that way ? Another word, and I will have thee locked up,” replied the irate landlord ; by his dress and manner, as much farmer as innkeeper. And he held the door ready to close it upon the

unwelcome traveller. Certainly the latter presented a deplorable figure. Thoroughly drenched by the rain, his clothes clung to him like his skin; his tall, lank figure, usually stooping, was now completely drawn together by the joint cold and wet. Altogether, he presented an object more entitled to pity than anger. If Rostock ever intended to visit the forlorn creature before him with his wrath, which is doubtful, he repented suddenly of his intention. His voice softened as he hailed him.

“Now then, Frederick Botzen, what plight is this thou’rt in?”

All the desperate courage of the storm-beaten tramp, which had stirred him to affront even a landlord, disappeared at the sound of his own name, pronounced by one whom, even in his

hazy condition of pain and trouble, he at once recognized. Whether it was rain, which, in dirty drops falling through his cap, streamed down his cheeks; or whether they were veritable tears forced from his eyes by the extremity of his anguish, it was impossible to decide; but the tone of his voice, as he appealed to Rostock, upon being addressed by his own name, spoke rather for the latter supposition.

“Oh, master!” he exclaimed, “don’t let them turn me out upon the road again! I’ve walked three good German miles since breakfast, and have not since tasted food or drink. Look at me. I’m sopped to the bones.”

This was true; he was so wet, that already a little pool of excessively dirty water had collected about his feet,

where he stood, from the dripping of his garments.

"That's just it," replied the landlord, in the tone of an injured man. "I might as well let in a water-spout."

"I'll tell thee what it is, Botzen," said Rostock, in an authoritative tone, "we'll let thee in upon certain conditions. Thou must to the barn to begin with, and wring thyself out a bit. Perhaps in that sack of thine may be some stray strips of dry clothing which will hold together till to-morrow. In the meantime, between a dry wring and the oven, we may make thee fit for decent company. Will that do, landlord?"

"Who's to pay his score?" snarled mine host.

Rostock looked hard at the brewer, who, with a rueful face, plunged his

hand into his breast pocket. He drew forth a soiled leathern purse, and proceeded to exhibit a few silver groschen, together with some copper money.

"I can pay for my bed and beer," he whined.

"Thou'lt get no bed in my house," growled the landlord; "but I can give thee some clean straw."

The tramp shuffled through the passage, in the direction indicated by a motion of the landlord's hand, towards a barn in the back yard. After a short time, having changed some of his clothes, Rostock interposing in his favour, he was admitted into the parlour. He was soon crouching by the side of the oven, his knees drawn up to his chin, and his enormous, bony hands spread out towards the warmth.

“Whence cam’st thou since morning?”
questioned Rostock, who had resumed his pipe, and sat by the table with a newly replenished mug of beer.

“From Ludwigslust, master.”

“How didst thou find them there?”

“Who? the police?”

“The police and the publicans?”

“Oh! the publicans are pretty well when you can pay for your bed and your beer—if you’re not too wet.”

“And thou wast too wet?”

“Outside I was,” with a wistful glance at the beer. Rostock handed it to him at once; it is more than probable he had especially provided it for the purpose.

“They drove me right through Redevin,” continued the tramp, drawing his coat-cuff across his mouth, but still

nursing the beer mug in his lap. "I suppose I might have gone right on to Bellahn, if I hadn't fallen in with you, master."

"And the police?"

"Oh! the police are all right, if you've only got your book in order; and mine is. We're not at the frontier now, you know; at Perleberg, for example."

"What do they do to thee at the frontier?"

"Make you show your money; five dollars at the least; a change of clean linen, and your clothes in good order."

"Which was not convenient?"

"Not quite."

Another dip into the beer mug, and the vessel was deposited again snugly in his lap.

"I hadn't got change, you see, master,

for a fifty dollar bank note that was in my waist strapping; besides, it might have made them wild to see so much money."

"What didst thou do, then?"

"Why, you see, master—I don't mind telling you, on account of the beer—you see, there were three of us, and only eight dollars, in cash, among the lot. It was close fitting; for we had to go in one at a time, and show the whole."

"And you did it?"

"Of course."

"And the last man didn't stick to the whole booty?"

"Oh, master!" exclaimed the brewer, with a virtuous shrug of the shoulder, and a toss off of the last dregs of the beer: "we wouldn't do such a thing, among ourselves."

“But what about the change of clean linen, and your clothes?” demanded Christian. “We were subjected to no such research.”

“No, not you; of course not. The police never search such as you. They don’t want to find out your clothes. But you see,” with solemnity, “my things weren’t come home from the wash, and among the three of us there wasn’t much more than a whole suit; that was all in one knapsack, and belonged to a soft young fellow just started from home.”

“You didn’t each of you borrow his knapsack?” Jacob here broke in.

“That’s the very thing we did, though. I put in a bran new waistcoat, just to make a change; this waistcoat,” tapping his chest with much pride, which dis-

played a green lawn sprinkled with red flowers. "My comrade, when it came to his turn, put in a neck-tye or two, and a shirt of his own. As for him who owned it, I lent him a new pair of braces that put quite a polish on his lot."

"And what did the police say?"

"The police said: 'Why all your knapsacks are of one pattern!' 'Yes,' said I, 'we bought 'em all at the same shop.'"

"And if they had found you out?" enquired Jacob, with some anxiety.

"Out with him! That's the word! Over the frontier!"

"What, back again?"

"Yes, back again over the black and white lines, to be dealt with by the magistrate of Perleberg; and never let stop till you get home again."

“Terrible !”

“Oh ! it ain’t so terrible as it looks. I’ve never been sent back, because I’ve always managed to come round the police, and keep a clean book. Some weak-minded people take it to heart, but it is of no use. They can’t eat you, after all ; and they can’t let you starve. You’re always sure of your bed, and your food at your herberge.”

“But do they never punish you ?”

“You get a cuff here, and a lock-up there ; you get sworn at by the soldiers, perhaps ; and you’re sure to be preached at by the magistrate, which is worse. But after a bit, you find yourself jogging along the road your own way ; enough to eat in your bread-bag, and a few groschen rattling in your pocket, that

some kind creature of a woman has slipped into your hand."

"We left you at Leipsic, the last time we saw you," remarked Jacob, who took a great interest in the tramping brewer.

"What have you done since?"

"Nothing."

"No work?"

"Not anything; at least nothing but scratching, and begging, and fetching the *viaticum*."

"The trade-gift you mean?"

"Yes; much or little as it may be?"

"Then how do you live?"

"Don't know exactly; never do know, till the day's out. Sometimes you meet with a good fellow who gives you a piece of bread, and a drink; or a good woman, who is thinking of her son upon his travels, and gives you a meal and a

groschen out of old recollection like. No fear of starving on the road; but the money is hard to get."

"But is not all this forbidden?"

"Of course it is. But you see I always keep my book in order; and am always civil to the police, and the landlords—the home-fathers; except when I set one against the other. If the police say: 'Whither goest thou?' 'To Hamburg, gentlemen,' I reply. 'By what road?' 'By way of Boitzenburg and Escherburg.' 'See that thou keep'st the route; and we give thee three days to do it in.' 'A thousand thanks, gentlemen. I am your most humble, obedient, unworthy servant.' Then, you see, perhaps I fall ill at Escherburg; when I take care that my wander-book goes to the police. Perhaps I'm taken with shivering fits

from want of rest and proper food, you know."

"You mean that you pretend to be ill?" enquired Jacob, indignantly.

"Oh, no! Of course not!" replied the tramp, with a solemn stare. "But what I was going to say was this: in case that I am taken ill at Escherburg, I get the good man, or the good woman, where I am seized, to take my book to the police; he tells my story, and gets it notified, and so I get time to turn myself round. And when I tramp into Boitzenburg a week after date, the police haven't got a word to say; but pass me on quite civilly to the next town."

"But do you never work?"

"Work? ah—work!" in an abstracted sort of way. "I believe you. When I

work, I *do* work. But let me give you a word of advice, young man," in a confidential and patronizing voice, with one finger raised in the air, as he turned with the utmost gravity towards Jacob. "This scratching and begging, as I call it—just by way of calling it something—is all very well in a general way. It has its pleasant points, and if you play your cards well with the police, you don't get bad marks in your book through it. But take my advice, and don't you have anything to do with politics. Don't you go joining any union, or be a member of this or that association or bond, for putting anything straight, and making anybody happier than he is. Don't you talk about tyranny, or liberty, or bosh of that sort; unless you're talking of foreigners, and not much of it then. Take

my word for it, the police will forgive you any amount of larking, or scratching and begging; but not a wink of your eye, or a shake of your elbow, much less a wag of your tongue, against my Lord Staatsrath, or my Lady Gräfinn. Politics are poison."

Although repulsive in appearance, and certainly not attractive in manners, there was something in the sordid vagabondizing of this man that fascinated Jacob. To him it was so entirely unusual and strange to fall into the company of one, who, as far as it was possible, seemed to make idleness a system, and begging, in one form or other, a trade; that he regarded him, first in wonder, then with an insatiable curiosity. He was a solemn man, too, a peculiarity which seemed in contradiction to the traditional character

of the tramp. He sang no songs, and although there was occasionally a quaint humour in much that he said, he was neither sprightly nor communicative. He seemed absorbed in the one great task of living on the road without work; upon the charity or forbearance of other people. And a very uncomfortable task it appeared to be.

As the day drew on to a close, the storm of rain abated, and a brisk wind came on to blow, which made the casements of the old farm-house rattle. Other foot-travellers dropped in, who had taken advantage of the lull to gain a stage on their road. These men being comparatively dry, were allowed to enter the parlour—a low, bare room, with a sanded floor—and were served with beer and bread and cheese. That is to say,

these luxuries were the utmost the resources of the establishment afforded. Some one or two partook of no refreshment whatever, but waited, in moody silence, or slowly puffing at their pipes, the welcome hour when the landlord should assign them to their litter of straw.

At eight o'clock, this worthy came in with a lantern. With a coarse, abrupt word or two, he called upon the guests to put out their pipes, and follow him to the barn. This order was obeyed with an alacrity which showed either great submission, or excessive fatigue. Perhaps it was not altogether surprising; all were weary of the day; some of them had walked and sat in their wet clothes for many hours, and looked forward to the removal of, at least, some portion of their

garments—notably their boots—and a dry couch, even among clean straw, as comparative luxury.

“Good night! sleep well!” echoed from side to side as they passed out of the room towards the barn, leaving Rostock, Christian, and Jacob alone by themselves. By most unexpected good fortune, the three travellers had been able to secure real beds for the night, and in obedience to the early hours of their host, were soon snugly dreaming therein.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHRISTIAN'S STORY.

THE morrow broke clear, warm, and sunny. It was a burst of summer, amid the chill mists and fickle showers of the spring. The air had all the clearness and crispness of the early time of the year, with the warmth and softness of mid-summer; a splendid foretaste of the time to come, the more welcome from its rare beauty and sudden development. Its influence upon the foot-travellers, whether in bed, or in barn, was magical. Rostock was in the middle of the floor with a bound, the instant he

opened his eyes, and beheld the sun streaming in at the uncurtained window. His two companions were not long in following his example. The barn rang with noises; coarse efforts at ineffectual song, whistling and shouting; the unconscious response, however unmusical, to the glad call of the morning breeze and sunshine. Some one or two of the tramps were soon upon the road, without breakfast, intent upon making all the progress possible in the freshness of the day, and of earning that meal before they tasted it. Others, having carefully brushed clothes and boots, were soon in the hearty enjoyment of steaming bowls of boiled milk, and dry bread; while the odorous fumes of the coffee, as ordered by Rostock for his party only, scented the air.

To their early meal, which, although

more pretentious than that of the rest of the travellers, was of the simplest character; bread and butter and coffee merely; there came an uninvited guest. The brewer Botzen, who had given himself a superficial rub and a smear, first thrust his head into the room, and sniffed audibly at the aroma of the coffee; then slowly drew his body after him, and with a slouching, sliding sort of motion reached one end of the form at the breakfast table.

“ Ah !” he said with a scarcely audible sigh, “ I thought you'd got coffee for breakfast. I haven't tasted coffee I don't know when.”

He turned half towards them, and slowly rubbed one hand over the other; stroked his leg, tickled his ear, and scratched his head by turns.

“Here, you sneak!” exclaimed Rostock, half inclined to be angry, “why don’t you be honest, and ask plumply for your breakfast, at once. Take this bread and butter, and turn yourself to the table; you shall have a basin of coffee for a treat.”

Botzen needed no second invitation, but with a grim chuckle fell upon the meal like a wolf.

Half an hour after, and the tavern-farm was deserted by all its late occupants. Some of them were already on the road to Berlin; the remainder, four in number, including the brewer, of those who had arrived after our three friends, now gathered round Rostock, as the common centre of attraction, and made but one company. Rostock was perfectly at home; put them through their facings

as if they were so many soldiers; paraded them; made them a short address, and then, as captain of a company, led the march towards Boitzenburg, their next station. Their strong, well-tuned voices, chiming in chorus under the direction of their captain, brought many a cottager to his door, as they stepped gaily past, and set the dogs howling and barking at their heels.

From this noisy crowd, Christian gradually drew away in advance, as they proceeded on their march, until he found himself walking quite alone. The restless activity of his thoughts had urged him forward, until he had far outstripped his companions. They, perceiving his silence and abstraction, and being moreover agreeably occupied with their own singing and gossip, had

made no attempt to keep up with, or to overtake him.

His thoughts so completely engrossed him, that he saw little or nothing of the scenery around him, and his eager foot kept pace with his rapid and tumultuous reflections. His lips even moved with the words which trembled, half-uttered on his tongue. His thoughts, shaped into speech, would have taken some such form as this; disjointed, yet coherent; wandering back far into the past, yet eagerly anticipating the future :

“Let me reflect. Now that the goal lies almost within sight, let me try to gather up my scattered thoughts, and to concentrate them upon the purpose I have held up before me so long. I stand upon the threshold of the realization of many cherished hopes—no, not many,

one fond hope, in which all other hopes are centred—and tremble to think of the slight chance by which all may be overthrown. So much hangs upon so little, that I totter upon the narrow space on which I stand. Is she true to me? Does Amalie still love me? All centres itself in that one question. True—true! What mad dream does my vanity strive to shape into reality! I cannot claim her constancy. She owes no plighted troth to me. We were too young to know our own hearts then; and all that I have hoped for as a man, may have no safer basis than the impulsive affection of a child.

“Three years is a long gap in a young life; for three years Amalie has been but a vision to me. A day vision—a night dream. What have I been to her?

Perhaps a memory—perhaps oblivion—nothing! I left nothing behind me but a recollection—have never sought to revive or to deepen it. Such was my pledge, and I have kept my word. Self-pledged — self-redeemed — self-vindicated. I come back with no claim, no right to demand; nothing but the recollection of a love which may be lost. Thus all is nothing unless love be there; if love be there then is all there, and my life's purpose is saved.

“She lives with *him* now—*his* daughter. His daughter, guardian, and comforter. She whom I left a lovely village girl, my playmate from a child, is now a staid woman, with duties to fulfil, responsibilities to bear. Duties too heavy for her years, but, I know, not too onerous for her firm will, and deep love.

She will be a true daughter to him ; she who hath no other father, no mother, neither kith nor kin ; no loved playmate of youth but me, her foster-brother. And he will be a father to her. A true, just, nay, tender father to her ; harsh and unyielding as he may be to others. I left her at Wandsbeck, already his adopted daughter, in so far that in the absence of relatives—orphaned and helpless—he stood by her in the place of all others. This he did because her father—his poor journeyman—was smitten by a falling beam while in his service, and died under the blow.

“ They say it was the only time that Urlacher ever gave way to terror, or grief ; that he blamed himself for the neglect of some precaution, which if adopted might have saved life ; that,

standing by when the terrible chance befell, he tottered to the ground with a cry of pain, and wept like a child. So hard a man as he! So hard, so rash, so terrible in anger. Heaven knows, I love him, in spite of all that has past between us. Would that he loved me! Would that he could look upon me as a son! But he raised his hand against me once, and in my pride and strength, I struck him down.

“Oh, master, master! if you did but know my heart! If you did but know how it has bled over that one unhappy blow! How I have prayed that the wound might heal, and never show a scar! How one word from you of kindness, of regret; one grasp of the outstretched hand, would bring me on my knees before you, as humble, as dutiful, as obedient

as a child! But you are harsh and stern, and I am young and proud. A miserable gulf yawns between us; a gulf of false pride and distrust, where there should be nothing but respect and confidence.

“And you are to Amalie as a father! You, whom I would still call master, and whom she, I know, in the trustfulness and gratitude of her heart, regards with confidence and love. One angry word—one hasty stroke! She whom I love is the cherished idol of him who bears upon his forehead a brutal scar from my hand! It has never healed, and passed away. It stands there, an indelible mark; visible to all men, though all do not know the cause. Rostock knows the man by this scar; but only thou, dear old master, and Amalie, and I, can tell its story. Let me recal it. How often has the scene

re-passed before my eyes; how often have I re-acted its every tone and gesture !

“The old house in the Shaar Market was never so gay as when Amalie came to visit it from Wandsbeck. She seemed to bring the country with her; so fresh and beautiful in herself, and crowned, as it were, with flowers. It was not often she came; not perhaps more than three or four times in the year; and every time she was lovelier than before. Then she brought bouquets of flowers for us all; for me little messages from old playmates, and delightful gossip about dear, bright Wandsbeck, and its old ways, and nooks, and people. She would come into the workshop; Amalie was never proud; she always seemed to remember, tender girl as she was, that she was the poor workman's daughter, although everybody

knew, as well as she did, that she was the master Urlacher's adopted child.

"We had not seen her for many months, and when she came that day, she had grown tall, and womanly, yet was as frank and girlish in her ways as when we had last seen her. To me she had never seemed so beautiful. Had I never loved her before—and Heaven knows, I had!—I should have loved her from that moment. She flitted about the house like a fairy, taking captive everybody's heart. She had a special message for me, from Hans Knabel, who wished to come to Hamburg. She had brought me a branch from our old hawthorn bush, full of blossom, the sight of which almost brought tears of joy into my eyes.

"She came into the shop to me;

stood by my side, and laughed and chatted, while I worked manfully on to show her how steady and industrious I was. But I had never felt before as I felt that day. I could have poured out my life's blood for her. I was so overpowered and confused that I could not talk to her as in the old days. I bent over my work with the blood burning about my eyes, only looking up now and then to be assured that it was not all a dream. I had something on my heart to say, but scarcely knew, or dared to think, what it was.

“At length she turned to leave me, and said, as she held out her pretty hand: ‘I shall not say good-bye yet, Christian; I am going to stay till to-morrow.’ Then I found my tongue, though what I said I never knew. The

words rushed straight from my heart, full of force, full of fire, full of love. I only remember how her little hand trembled in my own as I kissed it; how her bright face, with her surprised glistening eyes, grew flushed, and more beautiful than ever. And I remember that she did not draw herself away. Then a rough hand thrust me back against the wall, and the stern, whitened face of my master, Urlacher, scowled between us. He was ever a harsh man, and had no pity in his sternness for the young.

‘Insolence!’ he cried. ‘What does this mean, Christian?’

“I said not a word then, but gave him look for look. I respected, but I did not fear him. I saw the tears standing in Amalie’s eyes, as she turned

with one last look at me, and left the place.

‘What does this mean?’ he again demanded.

‘It means, Herr,’ I replied, ‘that I am now a man, and dare act for myself.’

‘A man!’ was his fierce exclamation. ‘My beggarly apprentice, rather—hound!’

He raised his hard, right hand, and smote me on the cheek, with the words : ‘So much for your manhood!’

“I dashed at him with my clenched hands, but he met me half way, and hurled me back again against the wall. In my mad rage, I seized a heavy staff of oak which lay upon the bench, and striking with it at his face, I felled him to the ground. I felt the blood spirt upon me, and saw the ghastly weal swell up purple and red upon his forehead.

Then a piercing cry, sudden and agonised, thrilled through my frame, and Amalie fell, sobbing at my feet, between us. Not all the horror of that moment could quell the fury of my passion; I stood unyielding, the terrible weapon in my hand, still ready for the conflict, and reckless of its consequences.

“But Urlacher lay stunned from the blow he had received, and as he made no attempt to rise, I saw that further defence was unnecessary. Throwing the staff aside, I raised Amalie from the ground, and tried to comfort her. Poor girl! she was as brave as she was gentle, and when her first terror was past, she ran to Urlacher's side, and raised his head from the ground.

‘Oh, Christian!’ she cried, ‘if you have killed him!’

“I shall never forget that. Her words pierced my heart. I fetched water, and knelt beside him. I bathed his forehead; I wiped the blood from his face; I called to him to forgive me. Oh ! what rapture I felt when at length he opened his eyes, and looked around him with a passionless gaze. It was life; I felt that; and the unutterable horror of the thought that I had slain him, which for a moment had overwhelmed me, passed away.

“I raised him tenderly in my arms, and placed him in a chair. There was no anger in his looks, but he turned away from me, and stretched out his hands to Amalie. There was brandy in his own room, I knew, and I ran like the wind and brought it down. He did not take it from my hand; he did not refuse, and there was still the same

passionless gleam in his eyes, but he still turned towards Amalie.

‘Who knows of this?’ were his first words.

‘No one, dear father,’ replied Amalie innocently, ‘but Christian and me.’

‘That’s well!’ he ejaculated, with a sigh of relief, as he glanced towards me for an instant, then turned his head away, and staggered to his feet. ‘I will to my room,’ he said.

“He gave his hand to Amalie, and I stepped forward, and offered him my arm on the other side. But if he saw me, he took no heed of me. He went slowly out of the room up the stairs, holding Amalie by one hand; and so passed out of my sight.

“Oh, master! one word—one look—

would have brought me at your feet!
My heart was full of sorrow and contrition; there needed but a sign from you to lead me in humbleness and obedience whither-so-ever you would. But you spoke no word; you made no sign; you passed out of my sight cold and unyielding, and left me to heal the bitterness of my repentance with my pride."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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45



